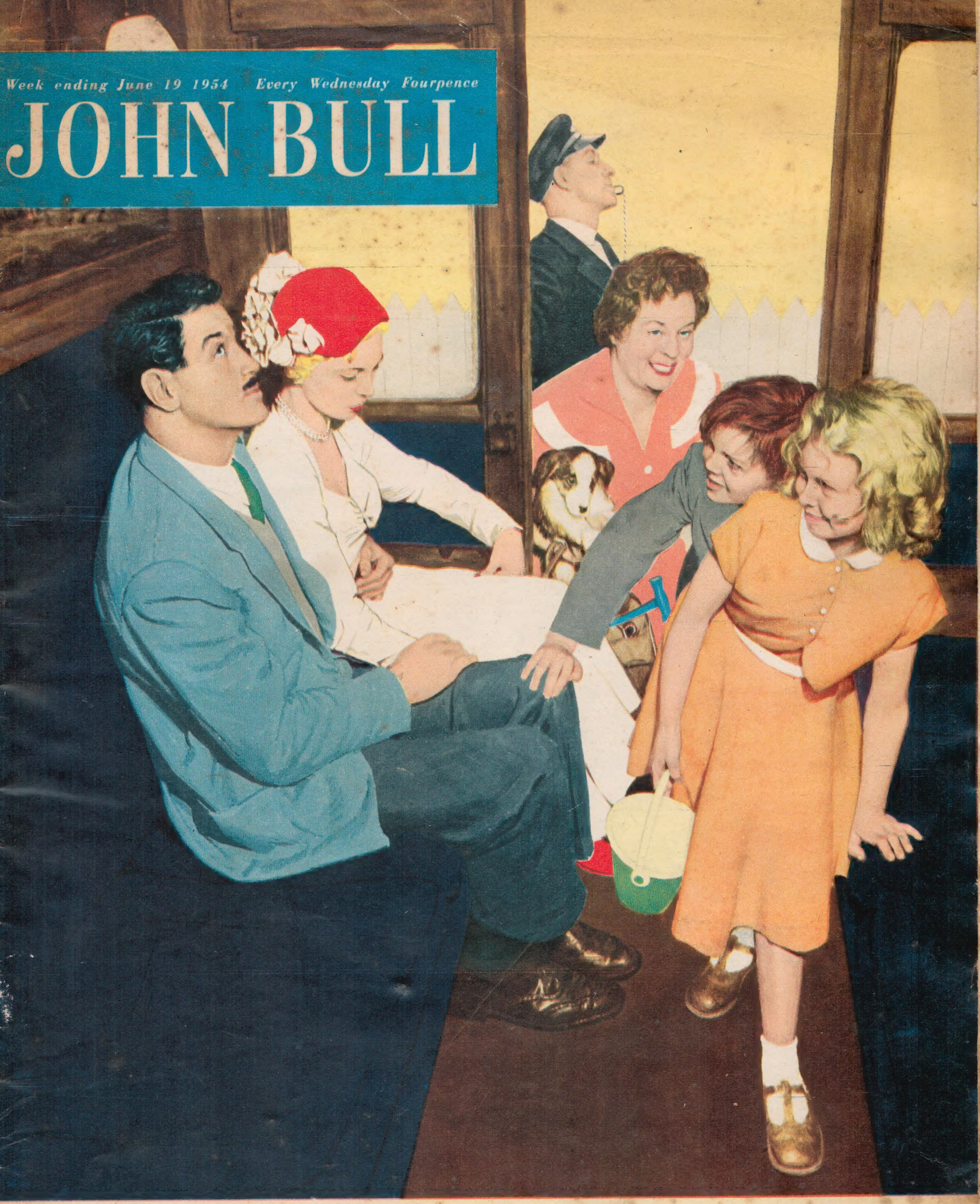
Week ending June 19 1954 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL



THE EDGE OF THE SWORD

CAPTAIN FARRAR-HOCKLEY, OF THE GLORIOUS GLOSTERS, TELLS THE DRAMATIC STORY OF HIS EXPLOITS IN KOREA

BY ROWNTREES

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EDITORIAL

Make criminals pay

ONE dark night last January, eighteen-year-old Yvonne Lovelock was hit on the head as she walked through the street near her home in Finchley, London. She fought back, but was knocked senseless.

When she came to, she was badly injured. Her hair had to be cut back to allow two stitches to be put in the wound.

Later, shock made her collapse again, and for three days she could not go back to her job as a hairdresser. Since then, she has been nervous about going out at night.

IF her attacker is ever caught—which is extremely unlikely now—she could sue for damages. But, like nearly all victims, she will probably let the matter drop.

YVONNE LOVELOCK
She got no compensation

"All she wants is to forget it," says her father, Mr. Reginald Lovelock. "But I do feel that there should be some automatic compensation for criminals' victims."

A pedestrian who is knocked down by a car usually receives substantial damages for shock and injury. But Yvonne gets nothing — because she was knocked down by a cosh-boy.

More and more people are being hurt by criminals—three times as many as before the war. In 1938 there were 2,721 cases of violence. In 1952 there were nearly 7,000.

THE victims have the right to sue their attackers, but there are many reasons why few of them do so. A third of the assailants are never caught. Of those that are, many are penniless. And the victims have usually had too much of the law by that time to want to start new legal processes.

When the Criminal Justice Bill was before Parliament in 1948, Lord Templewood wanted the courts to have the power to make the criminal pay. He said that magistrates had told him of many cases of young men "with a heap of notes in their pocket."

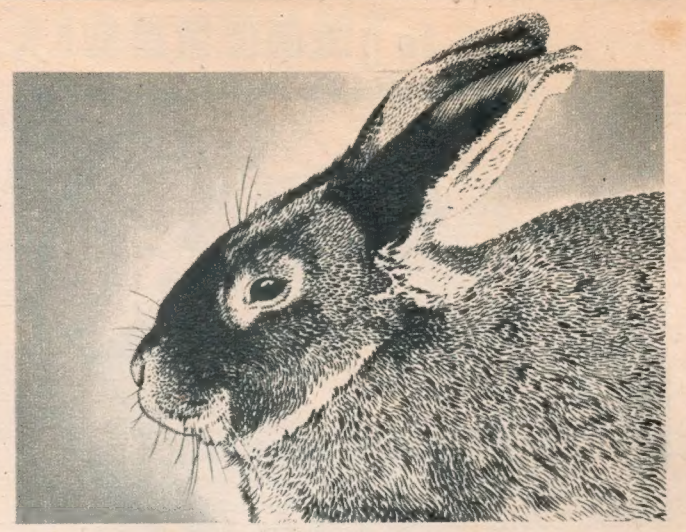
But the government replied that the principle of the law is that questions of compensation can be dealt with only by the civil courts.

WHAT an uncharitable principle! We hear much about the "fight against crime." When the enemies—the criminals—are captured they are rightly given every chance to rehabilitate themselves. But what of the victims?

They should be automatically compensated by a State fund, and the criminals, if captured, should be made to contribute to that fund. Then justice would be done, not only to the villains, but to their victims as well.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

A FINE day, a compartment to themselves, and no stops till the end of the line. Everything was going to plan, but it was too romantic to last. Just as the guard was blowing his whistle, Harry Zelinski had to spoil it all with a last-minute rush by a family party. There's nothing for it now but to stroke the dog, pretend not to notice the giggles, parry the questions—and hope for a secluded beach and better luck on the journey back home.



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JUNE 19, 1954 VOL. 95 NO. 2503 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

The nice girl used bad language

FIFTY years ago, my father ordered a man to leave our compartment in the train because he used coarse language in front of my mother and me.

Recently I went to stay with my niece. One morning she asked her daughter how she had liked the play she had seen the night before. The girl, who is nineteen and went to a rather strict boarding school, looked up from her newspaper and said: "Oh, Mummy, it was hell. Gruesome acting, and a perfectly b—— plot." I mentioned this interesting change in manners to their rector when he called. "Nothing to worry about," he said. "Bad language is meaningless nowadays; it's just one of those damn silly habits people pick up."—Miss C. P., Gloucestershire.

Nature Study

A FRIEND of mine recently started teaching a class of nine-year-olds. He expected a boisterous reception because of his beard, but there was not even a snigger. When he mentioned this in the masters' common-room, one of his colleagues said: "That's funny. Two children from your class have asked me quite seriously why I have shaved my beard off—and I've never grown one." Other masters agreed that to a child's mind it was more natural to grow a beard than to be clean-shaven.—M. F. Marais, Liverpool Road, Islington, N.1.

The Name's The Same

FOR days I have had my leg pulled. Friends and others have written and telephoned to make jokes at my expense. At last I have seen the cause of it all in an article headed: "Alan Nicholls Sells Frost" (John Bull, May 15). I, too, have that name; I also have a small beard and wear dark-rimmed glasses. Indeed,

Alan Nicholls sells frost

Alan Nicholls sells publicity

the Alan Nicholls in your story might easily be taken for my twin brother, but I should like to point out that we are, in fact, two different people and in no way related. I might add that I am also in business, but no one has yet suggested that my publicity business is a "frost." — Alan Nicholls, Uxbridge Road, Ealing.

Winter Quarters

SCIENTIST Alec Green may be interested to know of other places where flies go in winter time (John Bull, May 22). On unscrewing a ceiling rose of the electric light I have often found flies hibernating there. A little plastic wood seals off this hiding place. Another of their favourite winter resorts is behind a loose skirting board. If holes are made in the garden compost heap, wasps and bees may later be seen sheltering in them.—F. W. Willetts, Hullbrook Road, Birmingham.

. . . Along one side of my garden is a dry stone wall. As soon as the warm spring sun shines, dozens of flies suddenly appear from it.—Mrs. M. Robinson, Salisbury Road, Downend, Bristol.

The Conformist

AT first glance Edwin Phillips's illustration to John Bull's recent Gerald Kersh story, "A Tomb For Karmesin," depicts two typical workmen leaving Westminster Abbey. But I notice that one of them is smoking a pipe. I have heard of workmen smoking in church, and I recall the man who walked into church wearing his hat. He said to the verger: "Oh, you're High Church, aren't you? I'd better take my hat off, then."—The Rev. N. Greenfield, Idsworth Road, Copnor, Portsmouth.

COMING SOON TO JOHN BULL

NIGHTMARE IN COPENHAGEN

A dramatic new serial by MARTHA ALBRAND

Full details next week

By Numbers

I WAS a newcomer to sentry duty outside Buckingham Palace while serving with the Coldstream Guards. When I reached the extent of my beat I frequently noticed my colleague giving salutes—and to me it seemed without reason. I was puzzled, but thought I ought to play up to him. When my colleague was relieved, his replacement also gave several inexplicable salutes.

When I returned to the guardroom, I asked who the officers were that I had failed to recognize. I was told that to pass the time sentries often saluted taxis. Every taxi with a figure 5 in its registration number received a butt salute and those with a 7 a "present arms."—N. L. Measey, Grove Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

Drowned Rats

TO clear his barn of rats ("Free Speech," May 29), a farmer I knew used this unorthodox method. He would fill a large barrel with chaff and corn, and place gang planks so that the rats could get to the food easily. After a week, when the rats had grown accustomed to feeding in it, he would empty the barrel and fill it with water to the level of the food, camouflaging the water with a few handfuls of chaff. The next time the rats arrived for a meal, they dived into the tub as usual and were drowned.—Charles Poulter, Devonworth Place, Blyth, Northumberland.

Last Rites

YOUR letter describing how the Derbyshire village of Derwent was flooded to make a reservoir ("Free Speech," May 29) reminds me of an unusual service held in the church there. For some time after the reservoir was opened — by King George VI in September, 1945—the

church steeple could be seen above the water line. In times of drought it was possible to go into the church, but the building had become unsafe and a danger to visitors. Before it was demolished a few years ago, a final service was held in the church when the water was again low enough to allow people to enter.—P. B., Southfields, London, S.W.18.

Wise Owl

MY pet owl fell out of his nest when he was about a week old and I have had him ever since. As the photograph shows, he is very friendly

with the dog. His diet is raw meat, and mice caught by the cat next door. He knows where I keep his food and often helps himself to his supper. Then he flies on to my husband's shoulder to wait till bedtime. If the back door is shut, he sits and looks through the window until we let him in.—Mrs. Joan Cooney, Wykeham Road, Reading, Berkshire.

Night Shift

A NEIGHBOUR of mine with a new house has transformed his rough plot into a flourishing garden. How he found time for the work has been a mystery to me. He is away from home all day on business and spends the evenings pottering in his garage and workshop. I had never seen him or anyone else working in the garden, but I discovered his secret one day last week when returning home in the early hours of the morning. There was my neighbour, digging away with the aid of a small searchlight attached to the garden wall. The next night he was busy in the front garden, working in the light of a convenient street lamp.—Colin D. Smith, Cedar Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, East Kirkby, Nottinghamshire.

Mother's Day

MY sister's three children—Patricia, aged seven, Graham, aged two, and a baby boy recently born in a Calcutta nursing home—all have the same birthday: May 24.—J. A. H. Shepherd, Walcott Avenue, Christchurch, Hampshire.

Into Reverse

ONE evening recently we went to the theatre in our new car. On the drive home, I commented that the car clock had stopped—at half past three. My husband was puzzled, and said he was sure it was going earlier in

the evening. Then he noticed a scratch on the paintwork, which he knew had not been there before. A look at the number plates confirmed that we were in the wrong car. It was a gleaming new model like ours, in the same colours, and our keys fitted the doors. When we got back to the theatre car park we found a very perplexed man standing near our car, which had been parked a short distance from his.—Mrs. J. D., Middlesex.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech", and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service

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When the radio began to give details of the murder, Miss Wills looked up from her knitting. But Henry was still calmly stroking the parrot

ALIBI FOR MURDER

by A. E. MARTIN

Friend of the family, she called herself. Some friend! Because of her, he had to find an alibi—for a crime that was thirty years old

HENRY VENNIKER was dreaming that his parrot Pepina was alive again. Miss Wills had unexpectedly dropped in that evening, and it was the beadiness of Miss Wills's eye and the querulous squawk of her voice that had reminded Venniker; had caused him to glance up more than once at the mantelpiece, where Pepina sat so naturally on her perch that it was hard to believe she was now stuffed.

In the dream, Venniker had Pepina perched on his palm and she was kissing his lips when an interrupting voice broke through.

"... unsolved crimes," the voice on the radio said. Venniker's eyes blinked open.

His wife, Alice, was sitting opposite him on the other side of the fireplace, a piece of sewing neglected in her lap while she paid polite attention to Miss Wills.

Agatha Wills was fifty and, in the opinion of Henry Venniker, who was fifty-five, an antiquated hag.

Alice met his rather vague and sleepy gaze, and he thought she looked reproachful. It was a bone of contention between them that Venniker always dozed off when Miss Wills popped in.

Venniker got up from his chair. As he moved over to the radio, Miss Wills looked up from her knitting. "Oh, couldn't you leave it on, Mr. V? I'd rather like to hear that."

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY SEABRIGHT

"Why—do you like 'Unsolved Crimes'?" Mrs. Venniker asked.

"I don't know that I *like* the programmes," Miss Wills said. "But I do think they're very much in the public interest. Crime should never be forgotten, don't you agree, Mr. V?"

"We now bring you another in our series of real-life dramas," the radio voice said. "The story of another unsolved crime."

Venniker settled in his chair again with an air of martyrdom, and looked up at Pepina in silent protest.

He'd always taken a pride in his taxidermy, but he'd never made a better job of anything

than he had of Pepina. She looked as well now as she had done when she was alive, all those years ago.

"And now," the announcer said, "the third in our series—the Medstone Mystery."

Miss Wills almost dropped her needles. "Why that's here!" she exclaimed. "The murder of Mrs. Merritt!"

"Oh Lord, that old stuff!" Venniker writhed in his chair. "Everyone in Medstone knows that story backwards."

Miss Wills shushed, and he stared at her angrily. Anyone would think it was her house! He was so irritated that, despite his intention of studiously ignoring the programme, he found himself leaning forward, listening.

The story the wireless programme had to tell was simple. Thirty years ago an old lady, Mrs. Merritt, an inhabitant of Medstone, had walked home after visiting friends. "Don't fuss over me," she had said, when they had not wished to let her go alone. And so she had taken the last walk of her life. She was found lying dead in the street. The police found no evidence of foul play. There were no marks of violence on the body.

"She was frightened to death," Miss Wills muttered to her clicking needles.

Venniker said, exasperated: "What do you mean, frightened to death?"

"It's the most likely thing," Miss Wills said, unabashed. "I've talked it over with my cousin, the inspector, hundreds of times."

"Sh-h-h." This time it was Mrs. Venniker shushing for silence. Venniker got up and sought his pipe on the mantelpiece. Finding it, he ran the stem affectionately over Pepina's neck.

According to the wireless, medical evidence had established that Mrs. Merritt's heart had failed. And there the matter might have rested, had it not been for the Calthorpes, the friends the old lady had been visiting.

Miss Wills rested her needles. "John had just joined the police force then," she said. "He remembers the Calthorpes quite well."

As soon as they'd heard of the finding of the body, the Calthorpes had gone to the police with the revelation that Mrs. Merritt had had on her person a very large sum of money. She had just sold Mr. Calthorpe some property, and with the eccentricity of the old had insisted on being paid in cash.

As she walked home that night, Mrs. Merritt had in her bag the best part of three thousand pounds in notes. Also in her bag there'd been a very valuable ruby brooch she always carried about with her. And when the bag was found, it had contained neither the money nor the brooch.

THE programme went on: "What happened that night thirty years ago? Did Mrs. Merritt die from natural causes, and was she then robbed? Did some evil person, stepping from the shadows and demanding money, so terrify her that she died? If so, was not that person guilty of her murder just as surely as if he had struck her down?"

There was a histrionic pause. "Be that as it may. Certainly there may be somewhere in the world at this moment the person who took those untraceable notes and the gem which, because of its easily identifiable size and cut, the thief has most probably not been able to dispose of. But let us hope that the criminal, man or woman, may yet be lulled into the belief that time has fogged official memory, and be tempted to try to negotiate this ill-gotten but frozen asset. Then at long last the law may be able to rule out one more unsolved crime."

Well, thank God that's over, Venniker thought. He turned to Miss Wills. He couldn't resist twitting her. "It's a pity your cousin John wasn't an inspector then," he said. "He'd have solved it all right." He yawned. "Ah, well, whoever got the money must have spent it by now."

"There's still the ruby," Miss Wills said.

Mrs. Venniker was smiling. "I think I should have been tempted myself if I had stumbled on a fortune just then," she said as she took up her sewing. "Remember how hard up we were in those days, Henry?"

"I don't think Miss Wills is interested in our economic history," Venniker said, unhappily aware even as he spoke that the old hag would be on to it like a leech.

"We were engaged, but there wasn't a chance of marriage," Mrs. Venniker gossiped happily. "Henry hadn't any money. But it wasn't long before it all came out right, was it, dear?"

"That's right," Venniker said. "How about getting Miss Wills some supper?" He wished he could offer the old frump a stiff whisky braced with arsenic, but there was no whisky in the Venniker household and never had been. It occurred to him that his whole married life, almost his whole adult life, had been ruled by his wife's rabid teetotalism and anti-gambling mania. Not that the thirty years had been unhappy. Far from it.

POLITELY, Mrs. Venniker objected: "Why, Henry, it's quite early." And Miss Wills exclaimed: "Oh, please don't go getting anything for little me. I must be toddling just as soon as I've finished this row." Then, as Venniker feared: "You were saying, Mrs. V?"

"Oh, yes." Mrs. Venniker made a dainty stitch. "Just as it seemed we'd have to wait another year, Henry asked me to fix the day. A cousin of his had died, somewhere up in Cumberland, and left him his money."

"Why, how fortunate!" Miss Wills said. "I mean to say, it was dreadful for the poor cousin, of course. But, coming out of the blue like that, just when you needed the money!" Her needles clicked busily, then stopped. "Cumberland? My mother's people came from there. I wonder if they knew Mr. V's cousin?"

Mrs. Venniker smiled. "What was the place called, Henry? Oh, I remember. Chesterton. It always comes back to me because we were reading something by G. K. Chesterton at the time."

She rested her sewing in her lap. "Why, what an extraordinary coincidence, Henry! How funny we never thought of it before. Your cousin was G. K." She explained to Miss Wills. "George Kay, the name was. Or was it Godfrey, Henry?"

"George," Venniker said. "Good old George." Stooping, he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and yawned disgracefully as he straightened up.

Miss Wills took the hint and rolled her needles in her knitting. "I really must toddle along."

"So soon?" Mrs. Venniker rose. "Henry will see you across the road."

"No, no. I won't hear of it. Don't fuss over me."

Miss Wills felt her heart flutter. *Don't fuss over me.* That was exactly what poor Mrs. Merritt had said when she was leaving her friends, the Calthorpes . . . .

In the dark hour before dawn, the fleeting idea that had sneaked into Agatha Wills's subconscious germinated and grew into a suspicion so horrid that she let out a stifled cry. She was ashamed of herself at once; but her exclamation was heard and Susie, the young domestic who slept in the next room, came tapping at the door.

"Are you all right, Miss Wills?"

"Quite all right, thank you, Susie."

The girl opened the door; Miss Wills could see her eyes, inquisitive in the moonlight.

"Are you sure . . . ?"

"Quite all right, Susie," she said, more sharply. "I was having a bad dream."

The girl went, but Miss Wills was now shocked into wakefulness.

With daylight, she ridiculed the idea. Henry Venniker? *That* old stick-in-the-mud? She'd known him for twenty years.

But not thirty.

As she dressed, Miss Wills wished she had some excuse for calling on her cousin, Inspector John Grant, so that she could bring up the previous night's programme and ever so casually mention what she had learned about Henry Venniker's inheritance. But John was all for having facts you could take into court. "You be careful, Aggie," he'd say, "or that tongue of yours will be getting you into serious trouble."

"I'm quite all right, Susie," said Miss Wills. "I

Just the same, it was queer that Henry Venniker had been broke at the time of Mrs. Merritt's death, and then, *whoops*, had been on top of the world. He'd married and bought a nice house and paid for it outright, as Miss Wills had learned in the course of gossip. And he'd been able to set himself up in his pet shop and taxidermy business.

To her way of thinking, it was inconceivable that she'd never been told about Henry's inheritance. And never would have been told, she felt sure, if the broadcast hadn't jerked it out of Alice. But why? It was nothing to be ashamed of. Or was it?

"Chesterton" kept coming into her mind. She had a personal interest in Cumberland, but she'd never heard of a town of that name up there and, after a bite of breakfast, curiosity drove her to a

was having a bad dream." But the frightening suspicion that jerked her awake was all too real

postal directory. And presently she found that the finger running down the printed page was trembling.

There was no Chesterton.

Now, she felt indeed, she had something it was her duty to take to Inspector Grant.

SHE found him in his office. John Grant heard her out, with a worried frown. Then he said: "Listen, Aggie. I've known Henry Venniker more than thirty years. I went to school with him. He's a friend of mine. He's a worthy citizen with never a suspicion of anything against him. This Chesterton's probably too small to have a post office, or it may be the name of an estate. But just to satisfy you, I'll look into it."

He reached for a scribbling pad. "You say Henry's deceased cousin was George Kay? And Kay died in nineteen twenty-three—right? I'll get someone to dig into the deaths for that year. And there'll be Kay's will for probate, too. . . . Come in the day after tomorrow and I'll tell you what we've found."

But long before that—the very next morning in fact, Grant phoned Miss Wills. "I'd be glad if you'd drop in as soon as you can," he said.

She had her apron off before he'd hung up.

Miss Wills found Inspector Grant's attitude very different this time. "There's no Chesterton in Cumberland," he told her. "And no George Kay died there in nineteen twenty-three. We checked on all the Kays, irrespective of Christian names. None of them bequeathed anything to Henry Venniker."

"I knew it was all too pat!" Miss Wills exclaimed. "But, mind you, John, Alice is completely innocent, or she'd never have brought it up. Why, when it happened she must have asked Henry where his cousin lived, and he thought of Chesterton on the spur of the moment. They were reading a book by G. K. Chesterton at the time. They told me."

"And when she asked his cousin's name, G. K. came to his mind? That's possible." Grant was looking very troubled.

"What are you going to do?" Miss Wills asked, breathlessly. "Arrest him?"

"Good God, no! What I've learned doesn't necessarily mean anything sinister. And, Aggie, for the Lord's sake don't go gossiping about this. Just go home. Better still, shut yourself up in a room without a telephone. After lunch I'm going to talk to Henry."

When Grant entered Venniker's shop, Venniker came out from the room at the back. "Oh, it's you, John," he said.

"Just dropped in for a chat," Grant said.

"Fine. Come on through."

There were a couple of armchairs in the back room. Venniker waved Grant into one and took the other himself.

"Nice to see you," Venniker said. "It's a long time since you were in here last."

Grant waved a hand. "I happened to have a moment," he said. "How're the tortoises? And taxidermy?"

"Taxidermy's pretty well out, has been for years," Venniker said. "But things aren't bad, on the whole."

"And Alice?"

"Fine. She's gone off today for a day or two, to stay with her sister."

Grant took the plunge. "I feel a bit embarrassed, Henry," he said. "But we're old friends, and I know you won't take offence at what I'm going to say. It's like this. We get a lot of letters, anonymous ones mostly, from crackpots with bees in their bonnets. You know the sort of thing. And—well, the other night quite a lot of Medstone folk heard that broadcast about Mrs. Merritt."

"I heard it myself," Venniker said.

"You did?" Grant met Venniker's gaze and gave him a slow grin. "You didn't pinch the old lady's money, by any chance?"

"Of course I did," Venniker said. "Found her dead body, opened her bag to get her address, saw the money, and forgot all my principles."

GRANT smiled wanly. "So all I've got to do is go back for my handcuffs." He looked down at his hands. "Seriously though, Henry, we've got to investigate the things these anonymous letter writers drag up. And—well, to come to the point, we've had one that says it was in fact you that found Mrs. Merritt's money. It says you were hard up, then suddenly well off. I couldn't have some nosy policeman who doesn't know you butting in and maybe upsetting Alice. So I've got to do it. Where did you get that money so suddenly?"

In the small ensuing silence, John Grant prayed he wouldn't hear his friend lie.

"I inherited it," Venniker said at last. He had a pretty good idea who had written that anonymous letter. "I told that old——" He caught himself up. "I was talking about it the other night to Aggie Wills. It was bequeathed to me by a cousin who lived in Cumberland. I wouldn't mind betting it's Aggie you've heard from. Anything else you'd like to know?"

Grant frowned. "Quite a lot, Henry," he said quietly. "You see, there's no such place as Chesterton in Cumberland. And you told Aggie your cousin's name was George Kay. There was no George Kay who died in Cumberland in nineteen twenty-three. In that year no one bequeathed you anything."

Venniker was silent. Grant got up and stood looking down on him.

"Henry, old man, tell me the truth," he said. "I've got to know how all at once you got the money to buy your home and set yourself up in business."

Venniker got up, too. He faced Grant, with a smile. "I've often heard about the first lie that starts a trail of trouble, John," he said. "If you'd asked me in the first place, I could have saved you the trouble of looking for George Kay." He smiled again, as if in reminiscence. "George Kay! Phantom George! My God, John, I've spoken to Alice about him so often that I came to think he really existed. If Alice was ever to find out he was a myth, she'd say

Continued on page 32

SOS—and the flying doctor speeds to the rescue

by KEITH ELLIS

Over Australia's outback radio the call goes out: stockman injured in cattle stampede. Two hundred miles away, Dr. Allan Vickers packs his bag—and another flight of mercy is on

CLONCURRY, Australia

ABOUT SEVEN O'CLOCK one morning, two stockmen were mustering cattle in Queensland, Australia. Suddenly the leading animals took fright. Their terror rapidly spread, and soon the whole herd was on the move. As the hooves of two hundred maddened bullocks thundered towards them, the stockmen tried to ride for shelter. When the cattle had passed, the younger man saw his companion lying motionless, a torn piece of scalp hanging over his eyes.

They were in the Channel country, which the periodic flooding of Cooper Creek has torn into scores of parallel channels with banks so steep that it can be crossed only on horseback. The nearest help was at the station homestead twenty-five miles away; the nearest doctor was at Charleville, two hundred miles beyond.

Binding his companions' head with a piece of cloth torn from his shirt, the young man left his water-bag within reach and, mounting his horse, started the long scramble to the homestead.

Four hours later, Dr. Allan Vickers answered his telephone in Charleville. It was Reg Orr, radio officer of the Queensland Flying Doctor Service's Charleville base, reporting the accident. Orr explained exactly where the man was, and added: "A ground party's setting out now."

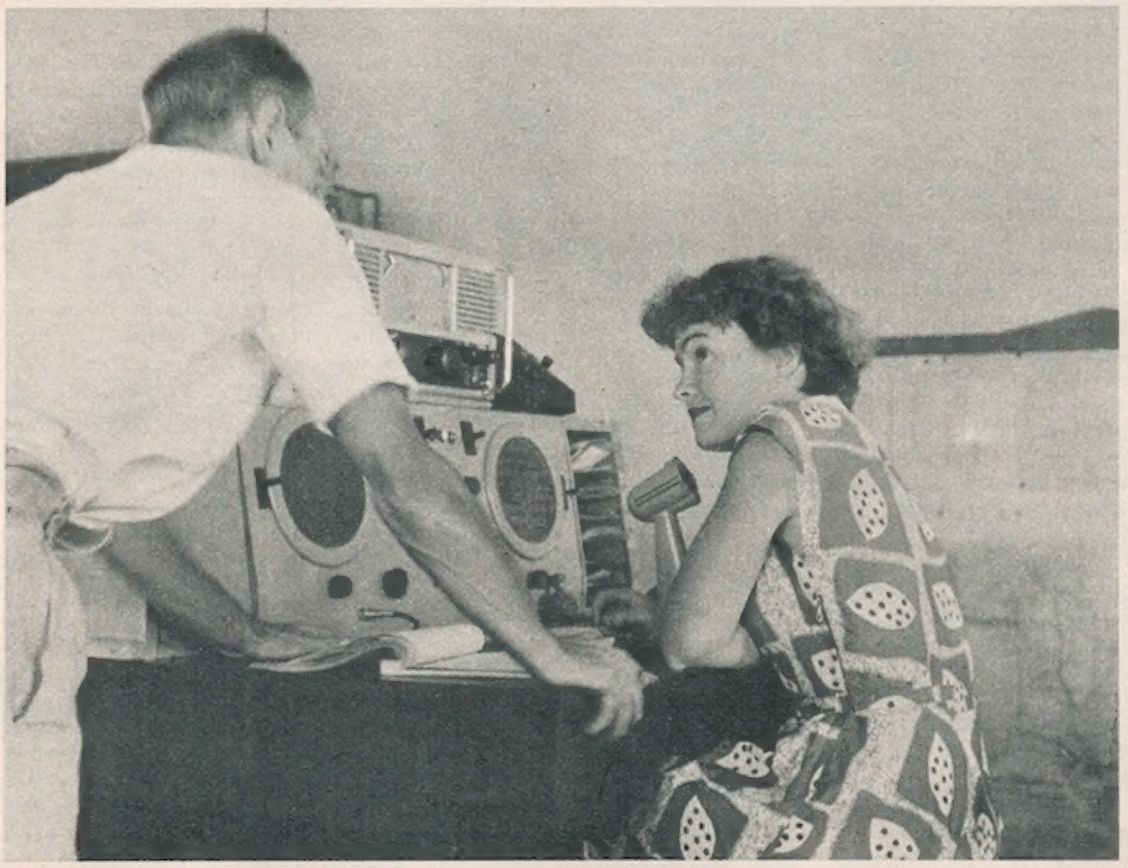
Vickers made up his mind instantly. "I'll fly out. Tell the ground party to light a fire when they hear my plane."

Twenty minutes later he was in the air. By two o'clock his plane was circling over the Channel country. Soon, the pilot noticed a dark pillar of smoke against the parched brown earth. Taking his wind direction from it, he landed on a flat ridge. Vickers jumped out. "Besides a torn scalp and bunged-up eyes," he recalls, "the stockman had concussion, severe spinal injuries and several broken ribs." After rendering first-aid, he helped to lift the patient aboard. "By four thirty he was in bed in Charleville Hospital." After several months' treatment, the man returned to the cattle station.

Since the Flying Doctor Service was formed, outback Australians can count on immediate medical help, no matter how remote their work, in case of serious illness or injury. From nine bases which cover half the continent—about one and a half million square miles—doctors such as Allan Vickers are ready to fly at a moment's notice to tend the sick and injured.

At fifty-three, Dr. Allan R. Vickers is medical superintendent of the Queensland Section of the Flying Doctor Service, and Australia's most experienced flying doctor. Though he no longer holds a routine medical post, he often fills the gap when no other doctor is available, and recently worked for many months as the flying doctor at Charleville. Since his first medical flight in 1931, he has flown tens of thousands of miles from almost all the F.D.S. bases in Australia. His strong rectangular face, crisp grey hair and piercing blue eyes suggest a man dedicated almost to the point of fanaticism. The Reverend John Flynn, who conceived the F.D.S., said of him: "He made the spreading of my Mantle of Safety a life work at very great personal sacrifice."

Vickers has given his life to the F.D.S. because he knows that without it many people would needlessly die. "Not far from Charleville," he says, "there are three gravestones standing beside a road where it crosses a creek. Each of these people was on his way to hospital when the creek flooded, and he was unable to cross. Each waited for days, and finally died—just because he couldn't cross the creek."



Dr. Audrey Halloran takes medical calls at the Cloncurry base. She treats minor complaints over the radio. As each out-station in turn describes patients' symptoms, she dictates their treatment

Took Tooth Out With Penknife

Jake Jarrett, an F.D.S. dentist who tours the outback with a fully equipped mobile dental surgery, says that country people with toothache had to fly hundreds of miles into town—or take their teeth out themselves. "In three months I heard of ten people maddened with toothache who took out their own teeth. They'd sit under a tree with a bottle of rum, grip the tooth with a pair of pliers and move it backwards and forwards until it worked loose—or gouge it out with a penknife."

Vickers endures irregular hours, extreme temperatures and hurried journeys. A few months ago he found the road to a sick man's house barred by a creek in full spate. He stripped, tied his clothes in a bundle and, holding it over his head, waded through the shoulder-deep water.

His most uncomfortable experience came when he set off by plane late one afternoon to tend a man with a broken leg. "A head-wind unexpectedly sprang up and, when the light failed, we still had sixty miles to go." The strip for which they were bound had no night-landing facilities, so they put down on convenient clay-pan. There, with dingoes howling all round, they spent the night.

"It was too cold to sleep outside, and we couldn't light a fire for fear of starting a bush fire, so we took it in turns to sleep on the stretcher inside the plane." They rose at dawn and with infinite precautions lit a tiny fire on which they boiled a billy of tea. Slightly warmer, they climbed back into the plane and took off.

Of the variety of his cases, Vickers says: "We get all the mishaps to which the human frame is liable—haemorrhages, gastric ulcers, appendicitis, complicated pregnancies, pneumonia, bronchitis—and a high proportion of head and

Australia's most famous flying doctor, Allan Vickers. To reach one of his patients, he had to strip and wade a creek shoulder-deep in flood water

Dr. Halloran and her pilot plan their course. Her practice in Northern Queensland covers a quarter of a million square miles

long-bone fractures caused by falls from horseback."

From dawn to sunset a pilot and a Drover plane specially chartered from Trans-Australia Airlines stand by to fly Vickers wherever he has to go. Three of the six seats can be taken out to make room for a stretcher. Every hour, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Reg Orr calls up the fifty-four out-stations on his network to ask for medical calls. The out-stations are operated by amateurs at isolated homesteads, hospitals, police stations and hotels too remote to be connected by telephone. Stock inspectors, contractors and station owners who may be working stock fifty miles from the homestead have portable radio for emergencies.

Only about half the homesteads have airstrips of their own. The rest have to rely on those of neighbours, civil air-landing grounds or a convenient piece of flat country. In the Cloncurry Flying Doctor area which adjoins Charleville, one of the regular landing grounds is the straight of a country racecourse; on one call, pilot Phil Allen had to circle round for a few minutes until a race finished.

Newspaper Marked Danger Spots

In wet weather, some of the strips may be unserviceable. "We ask them to drive a station utility across it at about forty miles an hour," says Vickers. "If they can do that, we can land. We ask them to flag off soft spots with newspaper held down by stones."

Though the pilot decides whether a flight or landing is to be attempted, Vickers sometimes had to restrain over-eager pilots from attempts he himself thought unsafe. Wherever possible he avoids risks: "I make my decision on what I know of the ground and the condition of the patient."

Recently, he had a call from an old sheep farmer at a station about two hundred miles west of Charleville. It was the wet season and the farm was isolated by floods. "It was about 4.10 p.m. when I heard that he'd felt off-colour in the morning, developed bad pains in his stomach about 3.30 p.m. and was now in agony. He was a tough old bird, so I knew that something was seriously wrong." He also knew that the man had recently had treatment for a serious intestinal obstruction.

Case For A Doctor's Skill

Vickers arrived at the farm at 7.10 p.m. and since last light was at seven thirty, the pilot prepared for a quick take-off. Fortunately, Vickers was able to relieve the man's pain almost immediately and, as he was not in need of urgent treatment, he decided to take him back to Charleville the following morning. He and the pilot then stayed the night at the patient's farm.

Such a case bears out Vickers's contention that the service needs a doctor, not just a first-aid man. A first-aider would not have been able to diagnose or treat the man's complaint. He would also have been faced with the dilemma of making a dangerous night flight or risking his patient's life by waiting until morning.

Although flights at short notice have gained much publicity for the F.D.S., they are only a small portion of its work. Every out-station has a well-stocked medical chest. In numbered drawers, there are supplies of forty-six different ointments, pills and lotions.

Every other hour, after listening for emergencies, Orr takes routine medical calls. Out-stations then come up one at a time and, following the simple rules of a book of medical notes issued with the medicine chest, describe the symptoms of any sickness they want treated. Orr then rings Vickers on a private wire, relays the symptoms and gets back a course of treatment, with references to the appropriate trays in the medicine chest. He then transmits this to the out-station. Later, the out-station operator reports progress so that Vickers can advise further treatment.

From his long experience of remote diagnosis, Vickers knows exactly when a patient can manage without his presence and when an expensive flight is necessary. "I can easily treat minor complaints such as bites, stings, infected sores and threadworms over the air."

During the severe floods of 1950, Vickers was informed by Charleville telephone exchange that a stationhand, cut off by the floods, was alone and seriously ill about 250 miles to the south-west. There was no airstrip, but the man had reported that the ground was firm enough for a landing. The message came from the station manager, who could just hear the man's voice crackling along forty miles of telephone wire.

It was already late in the afternoon. When they were two hundred miles out there was light for only another fifty miles' flying. The pilot wanted to continue, but Vickers noticed a storm gathering ahead and remembered that he was in mountainous country. For such occasions he has added a corollary to his motto "When in doubt, go." The corollary is: "But don't take unnecessary risks."

He Had To Take The Risk

"It's a tough decision to make," he says, "but I'd be no use to the patient if I crashed. Three lives would be lost—the patient's, the pilot's and mine. If we don't go, we risk only the patient's life." He firmly vetoed further flying that night.

Next morning they were in the air at 4.45. During the short flight to the sick man, Vickers wondered whether he had made the right decision. The pilot quickly found the lonely hut and, hearing the plane, the stockman waved from the door. The ground was smooth, but they had no idea whether it was boggy. "We just had to take the risk," says Vickers. The pilot

Continued on page 41

The dream of Father O'Reilly

by ***EDITH JOYCE SMITH***

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY HERBERT

To be in Ireland again. . . . After twenty years under the Italian sun, it was a tantalizing vision. And now, so near to fulfilment

FATHER O'REILLY had fallen asleep. And he was dreaming again that he was back in Ireland. He was walking along the bog road to Ballincarra. To his right was the mountainside, which the wild golden furze licked like tongues of flame. To his left was the immense stretch of bog, brown and purple, with the blue smoke of the turf-cutters' fires rising to the sky. The only sound in the dream was his own exuberant whistling as he strode blissfully along the road.

Then a voice cried: "One of the gilt candlesticks has gone today. It's outrageous. It's disgraceful. You must call in the police."

Father O'Reilly's grey head jerked up. He half opened his eyes. About a yard in front of him, planted firmly on the dark blue carpet, were two enormous feet in dull black leather sticking out at right angles to a thin black cassock. He let his eyes travel slowly up the drainpipe figure of his young curate until he reached the severe blue eyes blinking behind steel spectacles.

The good father spoke in his soft Irish voice. "As a matter of interest, Father Nicola, what size are yer feet?"

Father Nicola gazed aghast at his superior. "I don't see what that's got to do with—I take size thirteen shoes, Father," he said stiffly.

"Ah! Then the sooner you get to be a bishop and develop a paunch to help balance 'em, the better," said Father O'Reilly.

Father Nicola glowered. There was gross impiety somewhere, but he wasn't sure where. "I said the altar candlestick has gone now."

"Yes—yes, I heard you the first time," Father O'Reilly said heavily. He slowly got up from his carved oak chair and sighed. He moved over to the large sunlit window and opened it, letting in unchecked the passionate Italian sun, and the heavy scent of the mauve irises, and white myrtle blossom, and sweet blue anemones, which the sun's heat was drawing out.

"Shall I send for the police?" Father Nicola's voice was shrill.

"No—no." Father O'Reilly spoke hastily. "No—no, we'll see what is to be done. We must sort this out for ourselves."

"But I think——"

Father O'Reilly turned sharply. "I can do my own thinking."

He heard the door shut with an exasperated click. His mind was in such a chaotic turmoil that for once he didn't notice the pink ginestia and the white myrtle and the rosemary bushes gulping down the sun in the garden before him.

Today it was Wednesday. On Monday he had gone to his church of San Pietro in the very first white light of dawn; the unvarying start to his day in the little village of Tommaso. He had not been able to believe his eyes. The heavy brass from the altar had gone. Disappeared. On Tuesday morning it was a chalice. And now, today, one of the gilt candlesticks.

Pushing gently at the door, Father O'Reilly peered inside. It was an oddly moving scene that met his gaze, but one not meant for him

Father O'Reilly felt the sin heavily as if it had been his own doing. He was responsible for the honesty in the souls of his villagers. Somewhere he had lacked diligence.

MENTALLY, he had weighed every person in Tommaso. He could visualize not one, church member or not, who would take from his church. If only he had patience, everything would be returned, he was sure.

Father Nicola, he knew, was extremely annoyed by his attitude. The younger priest had been in the village only eighteen months. He himself had known Tommaso almost forty years now.

Tommaso was a place of wide, sweeping vineyards and olive groves, bean fields, and agricultural pastures. The church and most of the white and blue washed houses lay in a small bowl, while farther out the plains swept upwards, as if taking the olives and vines and the bean fields conveniently nearer the sun.

Back in Ballincarra, Father O'Reilly remembered, he had been a very earnest young man. Very much like Father Nicola was now. He'd been assiduous in his studies. There had been a special bursary from his seminary for him to study in Rome. And eventually he had been sent to Tommaso.

In Tommaso he had learned something quite new. The warmth that there was in humanity after the cold print of books. He'd sorrowed with them in troubles, and joined with them in their happiness. And it was as if in return for this that he'd acquired a unique power: the gift of understanding them all.

DESPITE his contentment, in these last few months he'd an overwhelming desire to revisit Ballincarra. Suddenly, he'd begun to get the feel of the bog road under his feet while he was walking in the burning Italian byways of peach and lemon blossom. But only for a short time: two or three months there would make him supremely happy! He had been saving for it.

The white stone church of San Pietro was built on a small hillock of elevated ground within the bowl, so that a hundred wide, white steps led to the door and served to bridge the pavement walk running beneath. High grassy banks lay on the other three sides, a fresh lustrous green spangled with celandines and blood-red anemones.

Father O'Reilly climbed the steps this midday hoping to find that, since his exchange with Father Nicola this morning, the altar vestments had been replaced.

On the floor before the chancel steps lay a workman's toolbag. The red carpet running up the steps was rolled away. Father Nicola was on his knees, tacking down wires to the bare boards with a hammer. In the belfry, Paolo the electrician was at work on the mechanical carillon.

"And what's this?" Father O'Reilly demanded.

Father Nicola looked up from his task, half guiltily, half defiant.

"It's an alarm, Father."

"Using the bells for a burglar alarm? I won't hear of it! Get up at once, Father Nicola. Paolo, you can stop that."

Father Nicola stood up. Angular, exasperated, he faced Father O'Reilly. "You won't call the police?"

"No."

"You forbid me to watch inside the church?"

"Yes," said Father O'Reilly. "I won't have

Peppito grasped the window-sill. He heard the noises behind him in the church and he was afraid. As he hauled himself up, the lights sprang on

a priest sitting waiting inside my church with the rudiments of the Gestapo on his mind."

"You won't lock up the church?"

"San Pietro's has been open day and night since the day it was built."

Father Nicola turned away, his mouth a thin, straight line.

That night Father O'Reilly did not attempt to sleep. He sat in the heavy oak chair in the study, listening. He had given way to Father Nicola over the church bell alarm; but the need for it depressed him. It was a sign of his own inadequacy.

Father Nicola had assured him that the electrician had fixed the alarm so that only one peal would ring. It would be over in seconds, and any of the villagers who awoke and heard it would soon turn over and sleep again, or think they had heard it in a dream.

Half-past two, and still no sound from the church bells.

As the clock finger made its way towards three, and peace and silence still reigned over Tommaso, Father O'Reilly began to relax and nod comfortably in his chair. . . .

In a small back room of one of the poorer blue-washed cottages on the rising upreach on the outskirts, Peppito was climbing over brother Georgio's crippled legs in the darkness, and trying to dress without making a sound to waken Mamma. He made do with his shoes, shirt and trousers, for his coat was behind a treacherously creaking cupboard door.

As he climbed through the window, the moon momentarily slid from behind the clouds and illuminated his small, white face with pointed chin set in determination and wide brown eyes alert. He dropped on to the privy shed roof, and down on to the ground.

For ten minutes he ran over springing grass pathways, but when he reached the village strada he slowed down. Under his thin cotton shirt, his heart was pounding. The darkness was thick, the buildings full of menace. He walked in the middle of the road.

He began a game with himself. With each step he took he said, *I-am-not-afraid-of-the-dark*. He was eight now anyway, and he wasn't afraid of the dark. But suddenly a dog howled from along a dark, shadowed alley, and he stopped, frozen to the cobblestones. He tiptoed past the alleyway, and then ran. Not very much farther now. He longed to turn tail, and fly back to his warm bed, and hide his head under the sheets. But he mustn't give in now; this was the last night he'd have to come out in the dark.

He turned the last corner, and saw the long, dark shadow of San Pietro's steps stretched out before him. He climbed them.

The heavy door creaked as he opened it, and the church smelt warm with incense as he stepped inside. He trotted up the aisle, and dropped on a knee before setting his foot on the

Continued on page 40

Yma Sumac, tempestuous star with a supersonic voice

by ROSS ADLER

The top notes of Yma's five-octave voice can be heard only by a dog's supersensitive ear. In the little Peruvian village where she was born, the people say that her voice was bewitched

A FEW HOURS BEFORE her London concert début two years ago, Yma Sumac, the Peruvian singer, vanished from her hotel. She failed to keep an appointment with Harold Fielding, the impresario, and missed a B.B.C. rehearsal. Frantically, Fielding began to search for her.

During the hunt, he recalled that almost the first thing Yma had told him was, "I have a bad temper. But do not worry. It is all over in five minutes." He also remembered that she was due to appear in radio's *In Town Tonight* that evening, an engagement she had fixed with reluctance because her demand for a £5,000 fee had been turned down.

Less than an hour before broadcast time, Yma was found hiding in an Albert Hall dressing-room. She stamped her foot angrily, and demanded: "Why must I sing on radio?"

Fielding remembered her warning, and waited for Yma to cool down. Five minutes later, she set off amiably for the studio, leaving Fielding with the impression that her vocal range—reputed to be more than five octaves—was matched by the variety of her temperament.

Yma's voice—its topmost notes, she says, can be heard only by a dog's supersensitive ear—can now earn her £1,700 a concert, and made her the star of a new film, *Legend Of The Inca*. It is suited both to her Inca chants and her momentary explosions of temper. These occur most frequently in moments of backstage tension, and are usually followed by apologies. At London's Festival Hall recently, Yma stormed at a doorman who was absent at one of her entrances. Told it was not his fault, she returned and begged his pardon.

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Her outbursts, however, never affect her performance. Even a last-minute switch in her songs leaves Yma unruffled. At one London concert there was so much changing of numbers that Yma herself lost track. When she came off stage, she had to snatch an attendant's programme to find her next song.

Normally, Yma is cheerful. At her Hollywood home, where she has a swimming-pool and a

Three in harmony—Yma, her husband and their son Carlos. At a Rome concert, Carlos took an encore for mother—with a song that was most unexpected

£100,000 collection of traditional Peruvian clothes and jewellery, she rests for three months each year. Her idea of a joke is to hide under the table and tickle the feet of her guests. She showed the same childlike delight when she first arrived in New York eight years ago, and discovered toothpaste. She liked it so much that she scrubbed her teeth twelve times a day.

On tour, the strain often provokes outbursts. Asked, in a provincial city recently, to make an early morning trip between concerts, Yma demanded: "What do they think I am—a can of film?"

The terms of her contract with her American representatives are strict. Thirty-five pages of small type determine her business affairs, dictate her maximum measurements, and reserve for her agents the right to say with which friends she shall associate. Few concert singers like to risk their voices more than two or three nights a week, but Yma has as many as a hundred engagements in three months.

Medical examination reveals that she has an unusual throat construction, which may explain how, in the upper ranges, she can release two and sometimes three notes simultaneously. To relax her vocal chords, Yma uses a traditional compound made by her mother at the family home in Ichochan (population two hundred), about 12,000 feet up in the Peruvian Andes.

Not A Señorita From Brooklyn

Yma claims that she is a direct descendant of the last Inca or Indian Emperor of Peru. Doubts about her background make Yma angry. When a New York agent suggested that she was "the Spanish señorita type," Yma coiled like a cobra, says a friend.

An American reporter once spent three months investigating a rumour that Yma was really Amy Camus, a Brooklyn girl who had won fame by spelling her name backwards. Yma has now schooled herself to restrain her temper when she is asked if this is true. Usually she replies: "I would consider it an honour to have been born in Brooklyn, but I wasn't."

Yma—her full name means "how beautiful"—likes to contrast her figure with the traditional bulk of opera singers. Five feet two, she has slimmed down to less than eight stone. Her jet black hair falls to her waist, and her hazel eyes are set off by long lashes tinted with green mascara.

Although Yma professes to be a sun-worshipper, she disavows the titles of Inca Princess and Virgin of the Sun God, which have appeared in her publicity. Harold Fielding says frankly that on her first tour of Britain tickets sold slowly—until he added "Virgin of the Sun God" to advertisements.

Taken To Village Sorcerer

Legends and the work of press agents have become so mingled in the Sumac story that it is difficult to sort fact from fancy. Yma herself says that as a child she often wandered away to sing to the birds and the trees. "One day my nurse heard me," she says, "and told people that I was witch-ed." From this comes the report that Yma was taken to the local sorcerer so that he could exorcise the spirits of the jaguar and nightingale which villagers believed were lodged in her throat.

At the age of eight, Yma was singing publicly. Word of her remarkable range filtered down the mountains to Lima, the capital of Peru. There, a young man named Moises Vivanco was making a reputation as a composer and leader of a company of folk dancers, singers and musicians. Vivanco made a fourteen-day trip by boat, train and horse to hear Yma, then twelve, sing in a festival.

But it was two years before Yma's mother would allow her to go to Lima, and then only to continue her schooling. Once there, Yma lost no time in getting in touch with Vivanco. Soon after, on June 6, 1942, she and Vivanco were married, and embarked on a South American tour. Success in Latin America led the couple, four years later, to New York, where fame did not come so easily. From living in one of the most expensive Manhattan hotels, they descended to a small flat in Greenwich Village. With Yma's cousin, Cholita Rivero, and a Cuban drummer, Vivanco formed the Inca Taky Trio (taky means chant). In four years they had only seventy weeks' work.

Then, in 1950, the sun smiled on Yma. She sang to six thousand people in the Hollywood Bowl, and astounded them by her effortless climb from the bottom of the contralto range to the top of the coloratura soprano. "There is no voice like it in the world today," wrote a Washington critic.

Although she sometimes finds the pace a strain, Yma has never cancelled a concert to save her throat. Once, at Hollywood's Mocambo, she insisted on giving a second show on the same evening, though she had to spend the interval prostrated by heat. Revived by smelling-salts, she went through her repertoire as if nothing had happened.

If Yma won't admit to being tired, she has one follower who makes no bones about it.

Her five-year-old son Carlos frequently accompanies her on tour. Recently, in Rome, when Yma was called for encores, Carlos took matters into his own hands. Dashing on stage, he announced: "My mummy is tired, so I'll sing for you instead."

Then, waving imperiously at the conductor for support, he broke into the strains of "If You Knew Susie."

THE END

Yma, who claims descent from the last Inca emperor, chants an Inca ballad with her husband and cousin Cholita Rivero. Her collection of Peruvian clothes and jewellery is worth £100,000

THE EDGE OF THE SWORD: The adjutant of the Glorious Glosters continues his stirring personal story of adventure in North Korea

My life as a captive begins with escape

by Captain ANTHONY FARRAR-HOCKLEY, D.S.O., M.C.

"We were filthy, unshaven, tired—living in a world that was only half real. Then the grim truth dawned on me. We were prisoners of the Chinese, and I must make a break for freedom"

IT WAS DIFFICULT to realize that we were captives. For a few minutes we stood about on the narrow valley path, held there by weapons and Chinese soldiers hidden at least two hundred yards away. Hardly a word was said between any one of us; the position was now clear to all as we waited for the next move—a move that lay with the enemy.

We of the Glosters had fought a bitter four-day battle against overwhelming Chinese odds. We had been forced back from the banks of the Imjin River, and compressed on a bare, stony ridge—surrounded by Chinese troops.

But we obeyed orders to hold on, heartened by the news that a relief force was battling through to us from the south. Then came the blow: the Chinese who had infiltrated behind us had halted the rescue attempt. There was nothing for it—we had to make our own way back, each man for himself.

So we set off, in small groups, for the march through enemy-held country. As I led my party of men along a narrow, muddy valley, machine gun fire came down low over our heads. Had they wished, the hidden gunners could have mown us down. Their meaning was plain. Feeling as if I were betraying everything I believed in, I raised my voice and called to my men. "Put down your arms. . . ."

We did not have long to wait. Sam had just strolled down to me from the group he was leading when we heard a shout from the main valley. Running towards us were three Chinese soldiers. These men put the seal on our capture.

As they drew closer, we examined them with curiosity; for this was our first chance to look at the enemy dispassionately—except for the prisoners that we had taken earlier in the year. Now we were the prisoners; and they were the very soldiers against whom we had just been fighting. They approached us, obviously very excited and very pleased with themselves.

They were all short men by our standards, but two of them were stocky and, of these two, one had an exceptionally pock-marked face. They wore the ragged yellow-khaki cotton uniforms we were accustomed to seeing them in—though the pock-marked man had apparently

Farrar-Hockley gave a signal as the prisoners began to cross the Imjin. Two other Glosters moved into his place, and he sank beneath the black river water. His first escape had begun

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NASH

Dominated by Chinese guards, the Glosters rest during their march into captivity. Among them are Sergeant-Major Baker (1) and Major Weller (2)

tried to patch his with material of a different colour.

They all carried burp-guns—submachine guns of Russian design—and kept their spare magazines in cheap web and leather belts strapped round their waists. None had a badge of any sort, but I noticed that the leader—one of the stocky pair—had a mark above the peak of his cap. The cloth had faded a good deal except where a badge had been. At that point showed clearly the outline of a five-pointed star.

Did Not Expect Ill-treatment

They were not unfriendly; that is to say, they did not maltreat us, though they would not let us carry those of the walking wounded who were too exhausted to go farther. It never occurred to us, of course, that they *would* maltreat us—much less kill us.

Eventually, by sign-language, Sam determined that they had decided to move us back down the valley. So back we went. We were certainly not going to spend the rest of the day sitting under the machine guns in that dark little ravine.

The main valley was filled with sunlight. But for our circumstances, it would have been rather pleasant to stroll along the track, chatting. As it was, exhausted, hungry, captive, it merely eased our situation that the weather was so fine.

We drew near to the foot of the slope, which we had descended originally in our withdrawal from the ridge, and found another group of prisoners awaiting us, under a very much stronger guard. Guy was there, the drum-major, Sergeant Peglar—as many as fifty others; many of us had been caught, it seemed. We could only hope that the others had all got away.

We stayed there for some time, and I decided to reopen with Sam the topic which I had broached at the point of capture—escape. The night would surely bring a good opportunity, and we must be ready for it.

Originally, before I realized that Sam was only just ahead of us, I had discussed the prospect with Crompton, the intelligence sergeant, and Lucas. They were game to come with me if we could only keep together: and I now told Sam that I felt confident that the four of us could make it together.

The guards began to move among us, removing the few cameras in our possession, but they missed my binoculars. After they had passed, we began to close up again to resume our conference but, at that moment, there was a good deal of shouting from above us and we looked up to see Henry being led down the hill between three guards. He explained on joining us that he had been discovered hiding under a bush, awaiting darkness. From him we got the news that the whole ridge had been occupied by the Chinese in considerable strength, and that they were searching the general area for others who had had the same idea as himself.

He had seen the Padre, Bob and Brisland marched down the hill from the regimental aid post and was certain that they had not been allowed to continue to care for the wounded who were still on their stretchers above us.

The chatter of our guards seemed particularly animated and one of them began to hail. We soon saw that this was provoked by the appearance of another Chinese along the track that came from Choksong village.

He was rather better dressed than the other soldiers—his suit was certainly new—and his head was not cropped, like theirs. His personal armament was a small pistol in a brown leather holster. He was obviously a man of authority.

Sam wasted no time in raising the question of the wounded on the top of the hill and those by the saddle at the head of the valley, where we had been taken. The Chinese officer spoke no English and we, of course, no Chinese; but eventually he seemed to understand and a number of us went back up the valley to pick up all the wounded we could find.

If we achieved success in this, however, we failed utterly in our attempts to persuade him to let us bring the wounded down from Hill 235. He would not let a single man go up the slope.

Herded On By Chinese Guards

The guards kept us going and, when we arrived back where the others were waiting below the hill, they joined in behind us as we continued in the direction of Choksong.

After we had been marching for about three-quarters of an hour, I realized that we were approaching the road that we had used between battalion headquarters and Castle Hill before the battle. Sure enough, five minutes later we were on it, walking back towards battalion headquarters' original position by the ford.

"There's another crowd of prisoners down there, sir," said Sergeant Peglar. "Look, down there, on the side of the road."

About three hundred yards away, on the eastern side of the road, we saw another large party. We began to strain our eyes to identify them. After a few paces, I could recognize the Padre, Bob, Sergeant Brisland, Baker, the support company sergeant-major, and two of the snipers.

In spite of the efforts of the guards to keep us separated, we surged in among them, shaking hands, congratulating each other on escaping alive, and commiserating with one another on being made prisoner. In his haversack, Bob had a stale loaf of bread—part of the ration issued

Below are the full names of the principal characters in this part

SAM.....Major P. W. Weller, M.B.E.
GUY.....Major G. T. Ward, T.D., R.A.
HENRY.....Lt. H. C. Cabral
BOB....Capt. R. P. Hickey, M.C., M.B., B.S., R.A.M.C.
PADRE.....Rev. F. J. Davies, M.B.E., C.F.

As the Chinese officer flung open the door, his torch circled the room. Farrar-Hockley heard the boxes being kicked aside: his turn was coming

upon the ridge. He now shared this between nine of us as he recounted what had happened after our departure.

Munching, suddenly conscious of our hunger, we sat listening by the roadside. For twenty minutes or so, he told us, there had been no sign of the Chinese. Then, with great caution, a group had come over the top of Hill 235 and, seeing the ridge deserted, had rushed forward. At this point, Bob, who had discarded his pistol, came forward with the Red Cross flag which accompanied the regimental aid post.

Apparently, the soldiers in the lead had either not been informed of its significance or were careless of this sign, for they opened fire on him. It was only due to their appalling aim that he was still alive. Then an officer or senior non-commissioned officer came running forward and told them to stop shooting—perhaps because Bob was plainly unarmed and showed no sign of resistance.

The soldiers obeyed, with one exception: one man with a burp-gun kept firing, and he stopped only after the Chinese officer had shot him. Bob felt that this was an encouraging sign. Coming forward, he showed them his Red Cross armband, surgical dressings, and other minor pieces of medical equipment. They seemed to understand that he was, at least, some sort of medical attendant.

They did not harm the wounded, many of whom were unconscious and unaware that they were prisoners. Yet when Bob and the Padre—who with unmarried members of the regimental aid post had volunteered to remain—attempted to organize the evacuation of the wounded from the hill, the Chinese stopped them.

From that moment, Bob was prevented from giving even a drink of water to a patient; nor were any of the others allowed to attend the injured. Shortly afterwards, Bob's party were doubled down the steep hill track to join the group of prisoners who had been caught on the eastern side of the ridge.

The whole headquarters area had been broken into by the enemy soldiers in search of loot. Letters, handkerchiefs, articles of underclothing, photographs, and newspapers were scattered over a wide area.

Stole Stretchers For Wounded

Medical stores, which Bob was denied at the point of the pistol, had been smashed or thrown away near the regimental aid post tents and vehicles; we were not even allowed to pick up the spare stretchers that we needed for the wounded with us, but we managed to steal three, in spite of our captors.

We marched to and fro along the road from one point to another while our captors argued over where we should go. The second time we returned to the ford, my anger was abated by the sight of a little Chinese who, having eaten a tin of peaches, attacked a tin of solid fuel. He prised the lid off, dug a spoon that he had found into the waxy contents, and then conveyed a pile of it into his mouth.

For a moment, there was no reaction. Then, with a terrible croak, he turned the most ghastly colour I have ever seen as he dropped writhing to the ground and began to vomit. This incident kept me cheerful for the rest of the day.

The Chinese were now so worried about attack from the air that they hid us and themselves throughout most of the afternoon. Lying under cover, I began to appreciate to the full that I really was a captive, subject to the instructions of the enemy, controlled by his government.

I think that I only fully realized this when we reached the headquarters area where, with all the familiar things about me, I found myself unable to come and go as I pleased. From this moment on, the consequences of captivity became real and apparent. The sensation of living in a half-dream vanished, except for my first moments of wakefulness after sleep.

Our route lay along the familiar road to Choksong village, between the hills D and A companies had held. All along the road, we met enemy reserves moving up for the night; hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers, each carrying a pine branch in his hands. As soon as an aircraft was spotted, they would halt, raise their branches like banners, and give as good an imitation of pine saplings as they knew how.

Choksong village contained pile upon pile of their dead; with these were dead mules and a few ponies. The air-strike of the day before had been terribly effective in inflicting casualties. Unfortunately, the Chinese commanders were not worried about the price they had to pay for an objective; their pockets were full enough to pay whatever was asked—and more.

Along the roadside, scraped out of the banks of the rice paddy, were little holes in which

hundreds more Chinese were curled up, sleeping; others were sheltering in the houses nearby. Once a party of soldiers wheeled bicycles past us, their trousers rolled up to their knees, their heads covered with baseball caps. The bicycles were marked: "Hercules. Made in England."

We marched on down towards the river, turning west along the bank into a small village. Here we waited for darkness. The wounded on stretchers were put into two empty houses, while the remainder of us were crowded into four ragged lines on a track that led to the river.

We sat or lay upon the packed earth and stones, filthy, unshaven and tired. There was no food for anyone; there was no medical attention for the wounded, though Bob did what he could, in spite of the fact that two of the guards had just taken his portable medical kit.

Collected Old Cans For Water

After forty minutes, a Chinese appeared with two steaming tin cans. "Rice!" cried a voice, and in a second almost everyone was up, looking for some form of container.

It was not rice; it was boiled water, but it was not ungratefully received. Mess tins, mugs, old tin cans, almost any article that would hold water were found. Those without discovered someone who would share and so all were served. Yet I noticed that, even though the spirit of comradeship remained strong and, outwardly, relationships remained as before, there was a difference in the way that the majority—both officers and men—behaved.

I studied this for quite some time before I realized what it was: they were suffering from a form of mental shock and were still living in a world that was only half real—as I had been that morning.

I had another conference with Sam and we considered our previous plan in the light of experience gained since our former discussion. He had managed to get a certain amount done for the prisoner-of-war column and he felt that he must stay with them to render this service as long as he was permitted to do so. If the Chinese removed him from the rest, he would be ready to escape. The same applied to Bob.

There was another consideration: a new set of guards had now taken charge of our column, who were not only more vigilant, but far stronger in numbers.

Planned To Escape That Night

As I was a strong swimmer, it seemed to us that I had better try to make my escape alone while crossing the Imjin that night; for we had no doubt that it was the intention of the Chinese to get us back over the river as soon as possible. The others should make their attempts as opportunity came, until such time as it became possible to institute a system of priorities.

This was agreed between us as we sat by Donald's stretcher, ostensibly taking him water which he sipped from the Padre's mess tin. As we left the building to go back to the others, my mind was settled: I was definitely going to make my escape that night.

Our guards waited for full darkness. The night was cloudy, and the moon had not yet risen; I hoped that we should not be delayed in our trip to the river crossing, whichever one we were to use. Eventually, after much confusion, we were formed up on the road and set off, carrying the stretchers with us.

It was tiring work. The road itself was narrow and crowded; many of the men were too exhausted either to carry the wounded for more than a few hundred yards, or to carry them at all. Of those really fit, quite a number were helping the walking wounded. The poor visibility alone made changing the stretcher shifts difficult; obstructed by the guards, and hampered by lack of space and men, it was often a nightmare.

With frequent halts, the column proceeded along the road that ran east and parallel with the river, until we reached the road junction below Choksong, where we turned north through the last cutting. Only then could I be reasonably sure that our crossing was Gloster Crossing.

As we drew near to the road junction, we became aware of a growing din. This cacophony was compounded of the shouts of mule drivers, the chant of coolies padding along, bearing ammunition on each end of a bamboo pole, the wheezing engine of an occasional ramshackle truck, and the cries of those who had become separated.

There was absolutely no traffic control. Two streams of human beings, animals and vehicles, flowed along the narrow track to the river in opposite directions. Soon we were part of one stream, and I observed that the one going south was three times the size of ours. Sweating and stumbling, we progressed down the rough track to the crossing, the stretchers jolting on our shoulders. It is to the credit of the wounded that they did not cry out.

At last we began the descent to the river. The Chinese wanted to push on, but Sam insisted that as many as were able should remove their boots and socks, knowing that a long night march in wet footgear would bring blisters at a time when we could least afford them.

River Crossing Was His Chance

This short halt gave me my opportunity. I handed over my stretcher to the Padre, but did not rejoin the forward part of the column. As we reached the river shore, I gave Crompton and Clayden a warning to be ready. The guard with us was dodging back and forth between my stretcher and the next, watching both sides of each pair of stretchers.

We entered the water together, his right arm actually touching my left side. We could feel the rising water and the pressure of the current. Now we were ankle-deep—now up to our knees —now to our thighs.

The guard moved off, between Clayden and Crompton at the rear of the forward stretcher and the Padre and Guy at the head of the one next to me.

I gave the signal: Clayden and Crompton dropped back and closed the gap between the stretchers. At this instant, I sank into the black waters of the river.

When I surfaced about thirty yards downstream, I half expected to hear shots and the cries of the guards. There was plenty to hear, but nothing of alarm or pursuit. Turning from the uproar of the crowded crossing, I went on downstream.

The water was very cold, but not deep just here. Indeed, in places, I was actually crawling along the bottom of the river. For seven hours I continued in this way, sometimes swimming, sometimes crawling; and all the time the chill was extending through my body.

Drowning In Swirling Stream

It was impossible to leave the river during the first few hours because I could hear their sentries on the banks. Afterwards, I was fearful lest there might be sentries that I could not hear. The cold had almost made me decide to take the risk when, rounding the spit of sand that pointed, like a finger, into the river below Castle Hill, I found myself in really deep water in the middle of a strong current.

My limbs were stiff with cold; my clothes were saturated and my boots were filled with water. I began to sink: I realized that I was drowning.

I was filled with panic. Being a strong swimmer from childhood, I had never before experienced such terrors. As I came to the surface for a moment, I looked up to see a single

Before capture, Drum Major Buss contributed a defiant Gloster gesture. He silenced the enemy bugler by playing British Army calls

Major "Sam" Weller—then a captain—before sailing to Korea. In the prisoner column he eased conditions by arguing with the guards

With his medical colleagues, Sergeant Brisland stayed on Hill 235. But the Chinese forced them to march down the hill and abandon the wounded

Colonel Carne (centre) and Captain Farrar-Hockley (right) with Field Marshal Sir William Slim before Korea. Six months after they landed, the colonel and the captain were prisoners

bright star shining from the cloudy sky. For some reason, this brought me to my senses. I drew off my beret, which was filled with water, tore the binoculars from their hiding place beneath my arm and, free of these extra weights, turned over on to my back, pushing my head almost under water.

Clumsily, with much splashing at first, but heedless of discovery in this crisis, I began to swim towards the south bank, where I knew I should find shallow water.

My arms and legs protesting more and more over the work to which I was putting them, I struggled on, pausing every two hundred strokes to put a foot down to see if I had reached a standing point. On my fourth attempt, when my legs were almost too stiff to move, I felt sand under my boots. Slowly, like a very old man, I waded on to dry land.

Stumbled Against Dead Mule

After a while, I was able to increase my pace, and was just ridding myself of the numbness caused by the cold, when I stumbled against a dead mule.

The mule was at the edge of a hollow; into this I descended. There were other mules there —and men, too—the remains of an artillery troop which had received attention from our air force during the battle. They were all very dead. I saw nothing worth taking except an old mule blanket, which was a most valuable find. Clutching this like a conspirator, I crept away into the night, found a hole in the river bank and, wrapped in my newly acquired covering, dropped into a sound sleep.

I did not wake until twenty minutes past eight the following morning. I should not have waked then, but for the fact that I heard footsteps coming towards me; and I think the events of the past few days had sharpened the alarm system in my brain. The footsteps grew louder. The hole that gave me shelter was in the river bank itself and, here, the bank was broad enough to permit a cart to move along it. I lay back, hoping that whoever was passing would do so on the far side, and miss me.

The next moment, two pairs of feet came into view. Looking a little higher, I saw the faces of two Chinese soldiers. They carried rifles.

They did not see me instantly: I lay still and looked as dead as I could. Then the rear man stopped, said something to the other, and pointed to me. The front man stopped also, and turned his head. I did not move; I had stopped breathing; my jaw hung open, conveying, I hoped, that *rigor mortis* had set in. Whatever they thought, they could not have considered me dangerous.

After a few moments, the leading man grunted, and went along the bank; a second or so later his companion followed. It was only after they had completely disappeared from view that I breathed again. Emerging from the hole in the bank, I made a swift reconnaissance. There was no one in sight. I should have to take a chance on that particular part of the river bank being under observation.

I hurried down to the beach, and began to look for the most suitable crossing place. I found a patch of shingle that would take me to the water's edge and, about four hundred yards downstream on the other side, a small V-shaped gully that looked ideal. Reluctantly, I waded into the chill water and began to swim across.

I did not take me very long; I swam strongly after my night's rest, and I was spurred, too, by fear of discovery. I climbed up the gully from the water, selected a hiding place, and stripped off my outer garments. There was a cold wind that morning, but my hiding place sheltered me.

Whenever the sun appeared from behind the clouds, its warmth came through a hole in the cover above me and helped to keep my spirits up, in addition to drying my clothes. In this way, I spent the hours of daylight, resting, and preparing for the journey back to our own lines.

Trudged Back To Battlefield

It took me four hours to reach the point of my capture. I recrossed the river by the western crossing. There were vehicles on the roads, and the hillsides in the valley were still burning from napalm attacks, illuminating the whole area. At last, however, I began to climb the saddle which I had failed to reach just before my capture and, finally, I stood on top of it, the first phase of my journey over. There was no path down the other side, but I could see that a passage had been forced through the underbrush and trees in a dozen places—probably by our own men less than forty-eight hours earlier. I selected one of those openings near me and began the downward climb.

I had been travelling for less than half an hour and was expecting to see the valley at any moment when I heard voices quite close by. I moved on very slowly.

A hundred yards farther on, rice paddy began, and the path swung to the right to run along the base of the hill. Looking down, I could just see the end of the gully and the valley beyond. Between this and my position, a large body of the enemy were digging weapon pits in the paddy banks and on the hill slopes on either side.

The diggers were Chinese. They were laughing and joking a great deal among themselves in between spells of work, and seemed very confident that they were secure; I saw only two sentries. Wriggling along on my stomach, crawling on hands and knees, sometimes running for short distances under cover of a bank higher than the others, I moved obliquely across the gully, wending my way between them.

The darkness was already waning when I reached the far side of the gully a short way from the valley. There was no cover through which I could move—the rice paddy continued into the valley. I began to climb the hill on my left, crawling through the scrub.

At the top of the hill I ran towards a group of young pines. Standing there, I could see the valley below me in the first light of dawn. It was going to be a race against the daylight. I ran on down the hill. I recalled that a stream flowed along the valley's length. It seemed fairly deep, but I felt sure that somewhere near there would be a crossing point for the villagers. I turned right, deciding to search no more than a couple of hundred yards before fording. I walked along the river path, peering down at the water for a line of stepping-stones. After about two minutes I found what I was looking for—and more.

Overlooking the crossing was a sentry with a burp-gun.

Bluffed His Way Past Sentry

Other than surrender on the spot, there was only one thing I could do. I descended the bank a few yards away from him and put my foot on the first stepping-stone. He called something to me that sounded less like a challenge than a remark. I mumbled something back—as incomprehensible to me as it must have been to him—hawked and spat in the way of the Orient for the sake of effect, and crossed the stream, taking my time. I expected a burst from the burp-gun at any moment—but nothing happened. I did not dare speed up until I was well over the top of the other bank.

As soon as possible, I left the path and

Continued on page 26

Alicia was near to tears, but she kept a grip on herself while Ross explained. Finally, she said: "I only wish there was more that I could tell you"

CHARTER TO DANGER

by ELIOT REED

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

He'd been badly beaten up, almost killed—yet his first anxiety was for the girl. Perhaps Max was right: perhaps he *was* in love with her

ROSS BARNES had come to Jean Seyrac's dingy lodging in Cannes to find the answers to three things: a stolen yacht, a kidnapped millionaire, and a murder. But he was too late. He found Seyrac dead, strangled with a length of picture cord.

The yacht was Barnes's seventy-two foot motor launch, Roselle. It had been chartered at Portsmouth by a man calling himself Caton Margolies, representing Vincent J. Flavius. Flavius was an invisible power behind world finance: Barnes was delighted with his luck. Obeying instructions, he took the yacht to Cannes with a crew of two: Tiny Kane, his engineer, and Ralph Peters, his eighteen-year-old nephew.

At Cannes, he was to meet Margolies at a café. But no Margolies showed up. Instead, a girl arrived—a girl who called his name and cried out to him to follow her. She was roughly hustled out by a man with a grotesquely twisted neck, and Barnes lost track of them. He knew now that the girl was Alicia Mars, a singer, and the man was her half-brother—Seyrac.

Furious, Barnes realized he had been decoyed. For while he was at the café, Roselle was stolen—presumably, with Kane and Ralph on board. Next morning, there were two further shocks. Kane was found murdered in a drifting dinghy; and Flavius had disappeared from his hotel. He had been kidnapped.

Miss Blieke, the financier's secretary, said he had come to Cannes for talks with a French industrialist, Merle-Florac. . . . Inspector Laurent, of the Sûreté, seemed to think she knew more than she had told them.

When Roselle was found, abandoned and empty, off Minorca, Barnes was frantic with worry about his young nephew. It was then that Alicia Mars came to him and implored his help. Seyrac, she said, was mixed up with a South American swindler named Alvaro Parra—and it was Parra who had impersonated Margolies at Portsmouth. Her brother would talk if Barnes promised not to incriminate him. . . .

Now, glancing up from the dead man, Barnes found himself covered by a revolver. It was Parra, and he was not alone. As Barnes leapt at him, he heard a movement behind his back. Something struck him on the head, and he lost consciousness.

PART 3

Nightmare Journey

THERE were waves of partial sentience, when Ross swung dizzily on some vast spinning disc. Then the edge would dip into a black gulf and he would know nothing. In one of the waves he was dragged across a rough floor, lifted, and carried down endless stairs. Later

his head was throbbing like the engine of a car and he felt the coldness of night.

He was crushed down in a cramped space, and someone else was there, too, sprawling half under him. He dipped into the gulf again, came out of it, dipped. The moments of dim apprehension became briefer. In one of them he reached out a hand and touched the cold face of a corpse. He tried to open his eyes, but the lids were too heavy, clamped down. The engine hummed, hummed, hummed. . . .

After a long time, he awoke to silence and found he could open his eyes. There were cold stars in the high sky and they swung past him in a slow dive, then up and back again, as if he were rocking in space. It took him several minutes to control the motion. Then he realized that he was lying on hard earth, and the dusty smell of it was in his nostrils. He was aching all over and shivering with cold, and the pain in his head was a dynamo that sent out waves of sickness to hold him helpless. He lay still for a while, then struggled to raise himself. He saw a mound or wall ahead of him. He got his back to it and leaned against it, trying to figure out where he could be.

A low moon was strong enough to light the scene, and slowly he made out some details. He was in a theatre, a small hill theatre of ancient design. He blinked. He couldn't believe that the thing was real. It was still too difficult to think because of the pain in his head. He could see, but could not reason. He was lying in front of the stage. The terraced earth, once the tiers of seats, rose in a semicircle before him, and above the farthest rim he could see the stars.

They were still now. There was that much gain.

He closed his eyes to rest. He felt a little better after a while, although there was no abatement of the pain in his head. He moved his limbs to get back some circulation. Hanging on to the low, broken wall, he pulled himself to his feet.

Next, he walked. At first he found it hard to keep a balance, but soon it was much easier, and then he could think again. He remembered that there were the ruins of a Roman theatre at Fréjus and concluded that this must be the place. Off the main road and not far from Cannes.

FIFTEEN minutes later he was phoning Max from a hotel in Fréjus, and his first question was about Alicia Mars. Was she safe? Was she still there?

"Of course she's still here."

He was so relieved, the rest of it did not matter. He interrupted Max in the middle of a question. "Don't let her out of your sight till I get back." That was the essential thing, all-important. Another of Parra's hands might be waiting for her at home, at the Villa Cerrito. "What did you say?" he added.

"When you failed to return, we went to Seyrac's lodging in the rue Tunis," Max repeated. "The room was empty."

"Empty?"

He remembered then. Jean Seyrac had travelled with him in Parra's car. He remembered it all too clearly, his hand reaching out. . . .

"We thought you had gone to the station with him," Max was saying. "Did he catch the train all right?"

"Listen, Max!" The connection was bad and to shout was to increase the pain in his head. "Be careful what you say. I don't think you'd better tell the girl. Unless you prepare her somehow. Seyrac is dead. I was too late. I ran into trouble."

"What? Where are you?"

"I'm all right. I've arranged for a car to pick me up. I'll be with you very soon."

It was three in the morning when he reached the flat. As soon as he saw Alicia Mars, he knew that Max had broken the news to her. She

Miss Blieke took the photograph and held it, trembling uncontrollably. "Why—why do you show me this?" she said fearfully

looked like death herself, but she had gained a measure of composure. She listened dry-eyed to the full story.

When he had finished, she said softly: "I only wish there was some information I could give you. But Jean would say nothing to me. When I did find out about the kidnapping, he denied everything, until he became frightened. Then he said he would speak only to you."

Max became briskly practical. "There is nothing more you can do. You have disappeared. Till tomorrow night you will stay here. Then I will take you to a place where you will be quite safe. You will write a letter to the Casino authorities and I will have it posted from Italy."

In the morning, Roselle was brought into the port and tied up at the Albert-Edouard jetty. Ross went aboard with Laurent and Guizet.

In the saloon, Laurent lowered his bulk into one of the armchairs. "Well," he said, "we have found your vessel for you, Monsieur Barnes, but you do not seem very pleased."

"I will be pleased when you find my nephew for me," Ross told him. "That happens to be more important."

"And Monsieur Flavius. That, also, is important. You must curb your impatience. You are almost as bad as Monsieur Margolies, who gives us no peace. Today he is offering a reward of fifty thousand dollars."

"Fifty thousand dollars!"

LAURENT nodded. "For Vincent Jacobson Flavius and Ralph Henry Peters, alive and safe. That may stimulate the navy." The inspector was being humorous. "I doubt if it will tempt any of the kidnappers, but one cannot tell. This is a peculiar case. Even in the financial markets, the effects present an enigma."

"I'm not interested in the financial markets——"

"I have had another session with the woman Blieke," Laurent went on, imperturbably. "The waiter from Juan-les-Pins is sure she met a dark-haired woman in his bar on the rue Flaubert. Blieke continues to deny it. From you, Monsieur Barnes, I would like a fuller description of the woman you saw in the Café des Lauriers."

"I've already described her as fully as I can. I'm not very good at descriptions."

Now it was coming, but he was prepared.

"You identified her as Alicia Mars, the singer," Laurent reminded him.

"Inspector Guizet assures me I was mistaken."

"We are not so certain now. Alicia Mars, very curiously, has vanished. It is necessary to find out if she is the woman who met Madeleine Blieke in Juan-les-Pins. The Casino has provided a picture and we have shown it to our waiter, but he is unsure. Perhaps when we find the original, he will recognize her. We understand that you and Mr. Varenine made inquiries about her at the Casino last night. You are still convinced that she is the woman you saw with the wry-necked man?"

"I went to the Casino to find the answer to that." He met Laurent's gaze without flinching. "You can't expect me to be any more positive than your waiter, on the evidence of a photograph."

Laurent gazed at him curiously. After a moment he said: "*Bon*. If you wish to remove any of your personal effects from your cabin, you may do so. Inspector Guizet will take your receipt."

"I'd like my clothes. Also the money in my cash-box."

With Guizet at his elbow, he packed a suitcase and emptied his cash-box. Parra had been honest about pennies. Or he had failed to find the tin box under the bunk. Ross signed the receipt and stepped on to the pier.

He was worried. Now that Laurent was showing belated interest in the girl, the town would quickly become too hot for her. And Max had had to go to the airport today.

It had been impressed on the girl that she must not answer the door-bell or touch the telephone. All the same. . . .

WHEN he entered the flat, he called her name. He called twice, but she was not there. A note was lying on the coffee-table in the living-room.

> "Dear Mr. Barnes, I have decided that I cannot put you and M. Varenine to any more trouble on my behalf. I do not know what the outcome of all this will be, but I have no right to ask you to take more risks. As it is, I shall always be grateful for what you have done. If I can think of any way to help you, I will let you know.—A. M."

His first impulse was to rush from the house and try to find her. She might have gone to the railway station. She might have returned to the Villa Cerrito. She might have left the flat an hour ago. Or ten minutes ago. And by now it was possible that the police had detained her for questioning. His chances of finding her were less than slender. There was nothing he could do but wait for a call from Laurent and hope it would come soon. In the hands of the police, she would be safe from Parra, and her safety had become his first anxiety.

He paced the carpet, he switched on the radio and switched it off. He stared into the street from the window and saw a postman passing towards the rue d'Antibes. Mail.

He went down in the lift to see if there was anything for him. Four for Max and one for himself, from England. Back in the flat he opened his letter reluctantly. Eleanor was frantic about Ralph, demanding more news. He had written something each day. He could think of no more assurances to give her. No more lies.

The phone rang.

It was Max, and Max exclaimed in dismay when he heard of the girl's flight.

"Laurent can't have anything against her," Ross argued. "She's intelligent enough to keep

"The money is in this," Margolies said. "You have your instructions." Ross nodded. It was clear to him now why Parra wanted him kept alive

quiet. If they do find her, I'll have to say I never saw her before."

"That will be a great help," Max answered. "She wrote that letter to the Casino. By now it has been posted. If she is picked up in Cannes, what is she going to keep quiet about?"

"My God! I never thought——"

Max cut in on him. "I shouldn't have left her alone. You can't trust any woman."

"She was thinking about us."

"Never mind that. Meet me at the Rotonde at one o'clock. A press agency man wants to talk to you. He's a friend of mine. Paul Jessel. I don't know what it's about, but it's very important. He has some photographs he wants you to look at. He thinks he can break the whole business wide open."

Jessel was an intense, swarthy little man. He said nothing till the three of them were seated at a secluded table in a bay window overlooking the sea. Then he opened a manilla envelope and spread out a series of agency prints.

THEY were all shots of a man who apparently did not like being photographed, and some of them were obviously taken under difficulties. The subject was hesitating on the steps of an exclusive hotel, hurrying across the Place Vendôme, waving the cameraman away in the foyer of a theatre, stepping into a large and expensive-looking car, shrinking behind a newspaper in the doorway of an airliner.

Jessel said: "Is that the character who hired this yacht from you?"

"Good heavens, no!" Ross looked up from the prints to stare at the newspaperman. "This is Merle-Florac, isn't it? How could you think he would be mixed up in this business?"

Mr. Jessel smiled a superior smile. "You'd be surprised! I've been investigating the great Merle-Florac. He was in London at the time your craft was chartered. He had been having conferences with Flavius. Later, his pet accountant spent a holiday at Juan-les-Pins. Later still, the assistant to the personal secretary, a dish named Fournaise, who happens also to be his girl friend, turned up in Nice. She was, in fact, working on her suntan along the Baie des Anges all the time Flavius was in Nice."

"Fournaise?" Ross was trying to think how and when he had heard the name.

"Marie Fournaise," Jessel elaborated, still

Continued on page 34

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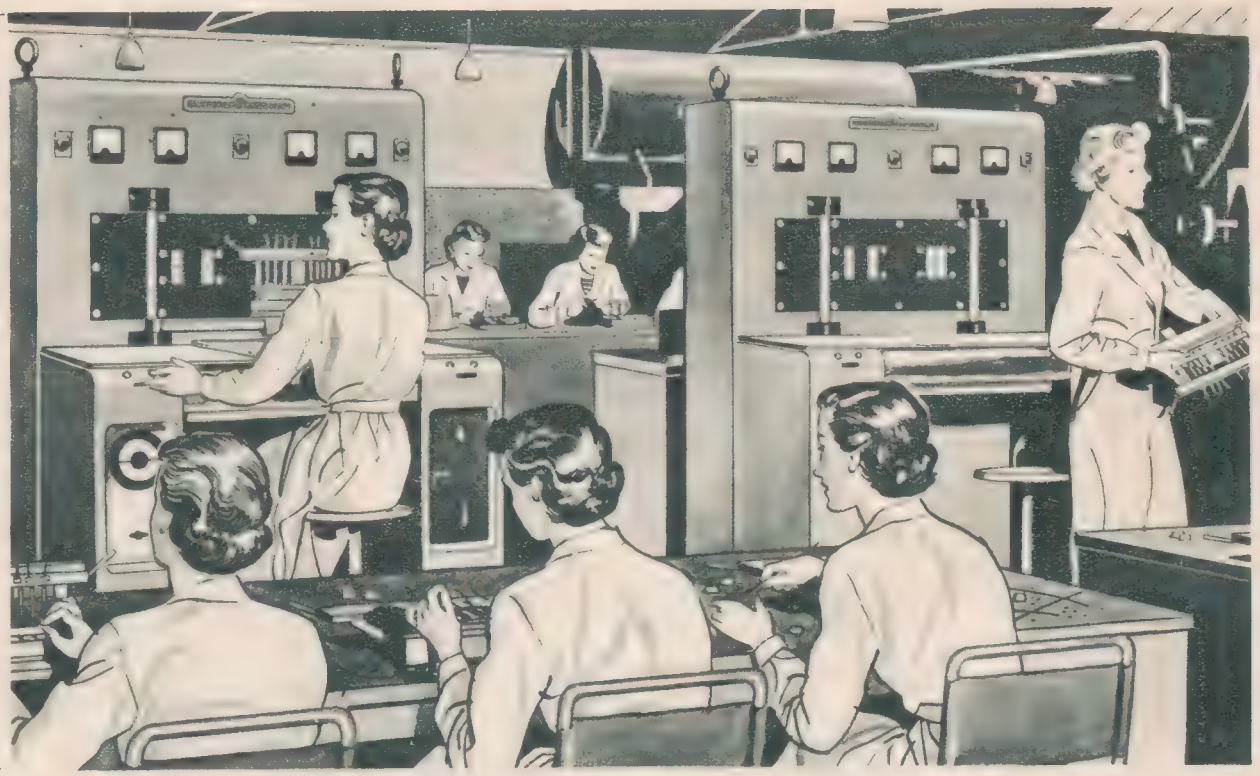

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Riley's patrols learn that quick wits save lives

by FRANKLIN RUSSELL

"You can prepare yourselves for anything," he warns his recruits. For when he's on the road, the A.A. patrolman may be called to stop a bolting horse—or deliver a baby

ONE DAY, A CURIOUS package arrived at the Automobile Association's training school at Widmerpool, Nottinghamshire. Tom Riley, the school's superintendent, unwrapped the package and set up a strange-looking object in the main instruction room.

It was an explosive seat ejector, which had recently been built into jet aircraft to allow pilots to blast themselves clear of crashing planes. "I knew that sooner or later an A.A. patrolman would be the first to arrive at the scene of a jet crash," he says, "and I was determined that he wouldn't make the mistake of tripping the mechanism when trying to rescue the pilot. So I asked the seat manufacturers to lend me an entire unit." Now, Riley demonstrates how to neutralize the explosive seat which, mishandled by unskilled helpers, has already killed a number of people.

Tom Riley, a thickset, jovial man whose deep voice has a Derbyshire accent, is responsible for training A.A. patrolmen for every emergency. "You can prepare yourself for anything, from dirty sparking plugs to three boys drowning in a frozen canal," he tells patrolmen.

Riley rose to his present job by applying the principles he teaches. Shortly before the war, he was driving his motor cycle along a Lancashire road when he saw two horses bolting towards him, towing a mower. The mower's razor-sharp blades were lowered and, as the horses swerved to avoid a lorry, the blades narrowly missed a cyclist. Riley drove his yellow motor cycle and sidecar off the road and ran towards the horses. He had to approach them in front of the blades, but he successfully halted them.

Could Not Open The Bonnet

Every ten days, a new batch of thirty patrolmen arrives at the Widmerpool school, an old country home, to begin an intensive course of instruction covering faults that may develop in any car on the roads.

From experience, Riley knows how difficult it is to learn the countless variations in old and modern cars. He recently demonstrated to his class an ignition fault-finding technique on a new car. Riley fumbled with several catches and levers but he could not lift the bonnet. "Finally," says one of the recruits, "he had to search for the car's owner and ask him." After his demonstration, Riley said, "I don't have to say again that you *must* know your cars—unless you want to look a fool."

Riley took over the school, which has trained

To show his students how to rescue pilots from crashes without blowing themselves up, Riley borrowed a jet aircraft explosive ejector seat

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM KEMP

more than 2,600 men, on the day it was started in 1948. At first, it consisted of one room in London, but by 1951 it had expanded so much that the A.A. bought the house at Widmerpool. The patrolmen, consisting of fifteen recruits and fifteen experienced men, take courses to instruct and refresh the memory in all branches of repairs. During courses patrolmen do "beats" along main routes near the school, and the experienced men pass on their knowledge to recruits.

Riley uses actual patrol reports to explain to recruits the conditions they are likely to encounter. One of his men came across an accident in which an expensive chauffeur-driven saloon was wrecked. A helpful crowd had dragged the owner of the car clear, but had ignored the chauffeur, who was lying injured and apparently dead in a welter of wreckage in the front seat.

"The patrolman, remembering his first aid training, immediately noticed that the chauffeur was still bleeding. He struggled to release him, applied emergency first aid, and afterwards received a handsome gift from the car's owner when the chauffeur recovered."

Spark Caused A Blaze

Some years ago, a patrolman raced to the assistance of a burning car in Lincolnshire. After extinguishing the fire, he questioned the motorist. "The car had broken down, and the motorist suspected the petrol pump," Riley says. "He had disconnected the electric lead to the pump and brushed it against the terminal to see whether there was a spark. There *was* a spark—and the engine went up in a sheet of flame." Riley had another lesson to hand on to his recruits—to check all such electrical faults by using a lamp bulb and a length of wire.

He appreciates the dangers of servicing by untrained men. Working in his office recently, he heard a shout and a crash of metal in a nearby room. A recruit had tried to repair his motor cycle clutch without first checking with his instructor. When he loosened the nut on the clutch the powerful spring had ripped the spanner out of his hand.

"Fire may appear to be your most dangerous enemy," says Riley to recruits, "but a badly jacked-up car, a seat ejector or a tyre can kill you more unexpectedly." He quotes the example of a lorry driver who tried to change a high pressure tyre without first deflating it. "The detachable rim suddenly smashed loose and took off the man's hand at the wrist."

Whenever Riley hears of an ingenious improvisation, he includes it in his course. Patrolmen learn to repair a fuel pipe with a cellulose wrapper and cellulose tape, and to improvise a distributor rotor with a cork and pin.

Riley is always finding that his men are doing work beyond the normal call of duty. He used to begin one of his lectures by warning recruits that the school was "going to teach you everything except how to be midwives." He deleted that sentence from his lecture when a Welsh patrolman told him he had once helped to deliver twin baby calves, and had been a midwife at the birth of a fine baby boy in a farmhouse along his beat.

Ingenuity by patrolmen in getting motorists back on the road, and their refusal to be troubled by strange circumstances, pleases Riley immensely. "One of our men was once asked by a Sussex motorist to diagnose a clicking noise in the engine. He took ten minutes to locate the trouble. It was a fault in the motorist's hearing aid."

Because Riley has seen practically every make of car break down at some time or other, he is inclined to forget that manufacturers do not like to be reminded of the fact. He recently helped to produce a film telling the story of the A.A. breakdown service. Half-way through the production, he received an irate letter from a car manufacturer.

"We learn," said the letter "that you are using one of our cars as a model in your breakdown service film and we wish to protest. Our cars do not break down." Hastily, Riley changed the picture to illustrate the breakdown being caused by a puncture. "But we didn't show what sort of tyre it was," he says, "otherwise there would have been another complaint."

Thomas Riley, who is forty-eight, began work in 1926 as a patrolman on a pedal cycle doing relief work in Derbyshire. He frequently rode ten miles to work. By 1939, he had been promoted to inspector, and after war service as company sergeant major in the Corps of Military Police, in which he did stunt motor cycle riding, he eventually became a superintendent.

When recruits first arrive at the school, Riley keeps an eye on them to see whether they are going to make suitable workers. "We don't make it hard for unsuitable men—they soon find how demanding the work is and usually resign after a short time."

He has encountered some strange circumstances preventing patrolmen from doing their job efficiently. One man was so superstitious that he refused to drive his motor cycle past any cart being pulled by a piebald horse.

Riley's own broad experience provides the background to much of his teaching. "Quick wits can save lives," he says. Once, he was driving with an A.A. inspector through a small Midlands town when he saw a group of people standing near a canal.

"Before I knew what was happening," Riley says, "the inspector had leaped into the canal. He rescued a drowning boy." THE END

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

As a clerk with an importing firm, Ronald earned £9 a week—with good long-term prospects of promotion. There was one snag in an otherwise pleasant job: Mr. Sharp, one of the partners in the firm, disliked Ronald.

There seemed to be no reason for it, but Sharp would pick on Ronald at every opportunity, making some sarcastic remark if his desk were untidy or if he were late back from lunch.

This irked Ronald and when, one day, Sharp complained about some incorrect figures, he answered back angrily. They were not his figures, and he refused to be blamed for someone else's mistake.

He was promptly fired, and looked for another job. He soon found that a character reference was essential for any worthwhile position needing his qualifications. So he wrote to his former employers, asking them to help. He admitted that there had been small disagreements, but reminded them of his excellent record and his ability.

There was no reply. Eventually, Ronald called on Sharp—who flatly refused to give him a reference. He also refused to tell Ronald why.

So Ronald sued his former employers to force a reference from them. "They have no right to destroy my livelihood like this," he told the judge. "Without a reference, I must remain out of work—or change my occupation. I've put years of my life into this type of employment. My ability is good, I've never made a serious mistake, and no doubt has ever been cast on my honesty." Sharp and his partners, he insisted, should be compelled to give him a reference.

Sharp's reply was brief. "We have no intention of giving this man a reference, and we cannot be forced to do so."

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 28

THE EDGE OF THE SWORD

Continued from page 20

began to ascend the hill ahead of me; I struck a track leading to the top. I was about to cross it when a voice challenged me: the opening and closing of a rifle bolt followed almost immediately. I gave a complaining mumble—the sort of mumble that I hoped would say: "Good Heavens, one can't move an inch on this hill without being challenged!"—and followed it with another spitting sequence.

This time it only half-worked. The sentry did not fire, but he did ask another question, which I felt would not be satisfied by more mumbling. Taking a chance, I dodged round a bush on to the path and ran.

Soon I was nearing the hilltop—and none too soon: it was daybreak. I could see the valley clearly now and although there were no signs of pursuit, I felt very exposed in spite of the cover of the trees, and climbed on.

The clear night had given way to a cloudy dawn. It began to drizzle; the drizzle turned to a steady, light rain. My route back now lay almost due south. The feature on which I sat overlooked a valley with one quite large village in the centre, and a few scattered hamlets along the hillside, as well as on a road running south beside a small river.

There were Chinese in the village. Careless of their movement, now that the low clouds hid them from aircraft, they ran about from house to house, and even cooked in an open-fronted barn. The only people on the roads were a few bent old men, their clothing protected from the rain by rice sacks. As the rain continued to keep the enemy indoors, a fresh plan—perhaps provoked by my successful bluff at dawn—came into my mind; a plan which became more and more attractive as I saw the clouds descend lower and lower until they threatened to obscure my view of the valley completely. At a quarter to one in the afternoon, I made up my mind.

I left my cover and began the journey downhill through a pine wood. By one o'clock I had reached the edge of the cultivated area on the hillside about a mile south of the big village. Here, in a hollow, I had seen a sort of lean-to shelter, made of rice sacks set on a wooden frame. Running out of the woods, I took the biggest rice sack I could find, doubling back into my cover immediately afterwards.

Under the pine trees, I cut open one side of the sack, threw it over my shoulders and continued my walk parallel with the cultivated ground until I reached the spot where the road rose temporarily from the valley into a cutting on the hillside. With great reluctance, I removed my smock and hid it here; concealed my watch, pen, pipes, cigarette lighter and handkerchief about my clothing; darkened my face with earth—and stepped out on to the road, the sack about my shoulders.

All was quiet. I did not hasten, trying to give the impression of age. Leaving the head of the valley, and coming into strange country through a cutting, I found part of a thin branch of a tree which I picked up to use as a walking-stick. As I took it from the roadside, I spotted a telephone cable running along the ditch. It looked exactly like the line used by the Americans, and I thought that it might have been left by the 1st R.O.K. Division. I decided to keep my eye on it. Watching the cable that disappeared occasionally into the trees beside the cutting, I eventually came to a sign in white on black. It said: "3783," and an arrow pointed straight on.

I began to wonder if I were in No Man's Land, if I had just come through the Chinese front line; I realized that I had been indulging in wishful thinking; the cable and sign were left-overs from the withdrawal a day or so before. The speed with which our troops had fallen back accounted for their overlooking the signs and being unable to wind in their telephone line. All this went through my mind as I plodded on down the Korean country road.

Every yard seemed a mile; I felt that the whole area was filled with observers. The road wound between low, tree-covered hills, partly shrouded in mist. The only sounds were the noise of my own boots on the road and the light pattering of the rain. Otherwise there was a complete, unnatural silence. I tried not to hurry my steps.

"Hi!" Someone had called me from

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2nd LOOK

See how Persil shifts STAINS! Yes, Persil washes whiter because it washes *cleaner.*

3rd LOOK

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4th LOOK

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the hill to my right: I felt like saying: "Who—me?"

A figure came running down from the trees, the bushes rustling loudly as he passed through them. I saw that it was a Chinese; in his hand he carried a long-barrelled pistol that looked like a Mauser. It was pointing in my direction. I decided that the time had come to try the biggest hoax of all; for above me I saw two yellow faces looking down along the barrel of a light machine-gun.

He ran up to me, motioning me to raise my hands. Satisfied that I had no weapons in them he ran his hands over me, turned me round and raised the rice sack over my shoulders. I had screwed up my eyes in an effort to distort their roundness and now, in a shaking voice that was not entirely feigned, I pointed up the road and said almost the only Korean I knew: "*Comupsom-nida*"—"Thank you."

Sentry Circled Him

I could not tell whether he was impressed or not. He circled round me twice, evidently not sure what to make of me. Then, to my amazement, he seemed satisfied and waved me on. I did not look back, but kept going until I had turned the next bend in the road, where I paused, ostensibly to wipe the rain from my face. It was, in fact, sweat.

I had now much less than a thousand yards to go to the defence-line which we had planned to hold at all costs, and so must be in No Man's Land quite certainly. Yet, in spite of my growing conviction that I really was through the enemy lines, I maintained my gait, and held on to my rice sack as before; a patrol might be following me.

The distance to my destination decreased steadily: eight hundred yards—seven hundred—six hundred—the road ran now up a slight incline towards yet another small cutting. In the centre of this, a pit had been dug in the road—presumably to cover our withdrawal. I skirted it and walked out through the far side of the cutting.

Facing me at a distance of about fifteen feet, as I came round the bend, was a beetle-browed young man in a navy blue serge uniform which I knew, at once, to belong to the North Korean Army. He was in the process of unwrapping an automatic pistol from a piece of red silk as I appeared, and, before I could do anything, he was pointing it at my chest. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was recaptured!

I could not hope to convince this man that I was a Korean; it would only make matters worse if I did. When I failed to obey his instructions to walk back down the road, he threw stones. All the time, he kept his pistol pointed at me steadily, but remained sufficiently far away to avoid assault.

Wet And Miserable

Eventually, I got tired of being stoned, and so, with a heavy heart, I began to walk back along the road. He would not even permit me the shelter of the rice sack but kicked it into the ditch; so I was both wet and miserable.

As we came to junctions or forks along the way, he would indicate the new direction to me with a grunt and a nod of his head. At the third turning, the telephone cable reappeared and by it I saw, with horror, a sign: "3783."

It had never occurred to me that this was the sign of a North Korean unit! We were to follow it for the next two hours.

Our immediate destination was, apparently, a Korean village. Here, in the centre of the village, we met another group of officers outside the school, on which someone had fixed a large, new, red star, and a heavily varnished picture of Kim Il Sung, the President of North Korea.

After a few minutes' chatter with a Korean civilian, who had evidently taken over the village leadership, they slung their leather map-cases over their shoulders and left the village at the opposite end to that of our entry. Two officers now guarded me with drawn pistols as we marched, but my second lieutenant kept on coming back to ensure that they had not lost me and were keeping me subdued. For good measure, he landed a couple of hearty kicks on the side of my leg as I passed.

I was thoroughly wet and cold, to say nothing of my depression at being recaptured just when everything had seemed set so fair. However, as we marched I consoled myself with the thought that we were still south of the Imjin River and that tomorrow—maybe even tonight—there might be another chance to escape. But I was not sorry when our journey ended. The officers were fed up with the rain, it seemed: they turned a family out of the next house they came to and we settled down for the night.

The next morning was bright and sunny. As there had been no opportunity to escape during the night, I began to look about me as soon as we set out towards our real destination. The "3783" signs appeared at intervals along the route, and I was anxious to spot some recognizable landmark by which I could fix my position.

Eventually, after climbing a long, steep path up the side of a mountain, we reached a pass between the two highest points. This was our immediate destination; the personnel of "3783" crowded the entire area.

Unexpected Question

I was removed from the curious crowd of ragged male and female soldiers and ordered to sit down by two officers, one of whom was a colonel. To my surprise, the other, a senior captain, spoke some English; but the questions were not what I expected: "Why have you come to Korea?"

I did not answer. He began to supply the answers, reading with difficulty from an anti-American pamphlet he suddenly produced. When he had finished, he asked: "You have understood this?"

"I have nothing to say," I replied.

"Too many Englishman," he said, pointing down the track. "Go."

Feeling that this was rather an ominous statement, I was taken in charge by a warrant officer and two soldiers, who doubled me down the pass. I was still mulling over what the captain had meant when the answer was provided for me. Midway along the column we were overtaking, I found Privates Fox and Graham of my battalion. What the North Korean had meant to say was: "Two more Englishmen." Here they were.

Two Bearded Glosters

Graham was a reservist, a dour north-countryman who was fast growing a magnificent red beard. One of the assault pioneers, he had been caught independently of the main body. Fox was a young volunteer in D Company, originating from Liverpool but living in the Isle of Man. He, too, was growing a beard—a fair one that was beginning to curl most elegantly.

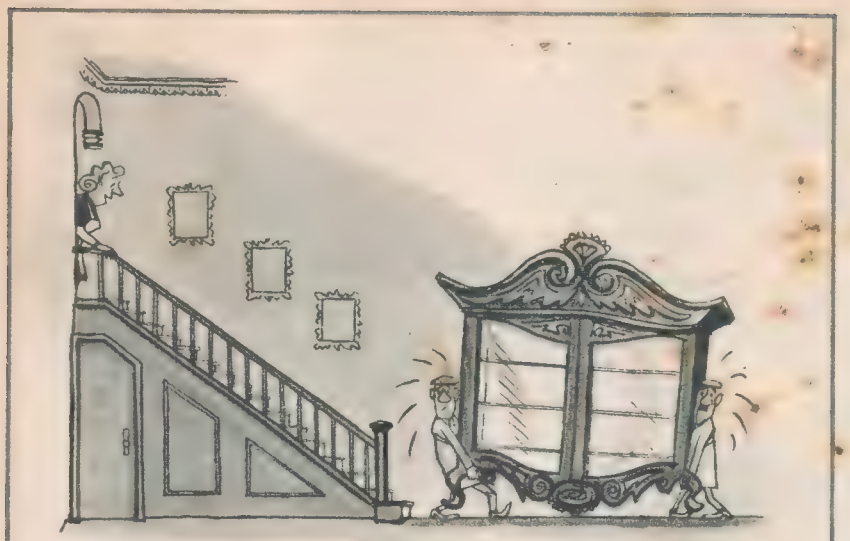
We shook hands warmly, and told our stories to one another, as we continued the march in a direction that was generally south-east — approximately towards Uijong-bu, I thought. I explained this to my companions and began to discuss escape, a prospect which they viewed with enthusiasm.

We had no food between us and, as the Koreans had been giving them very little food, it seemed unlikely that we should get an opportunity to save up. However, it was a fine, warm day; the three of us were together; we were all set to escape the moment a good opportunity presented itself, and—we were marching in the right direction. Our morale was high.

The march continued throughout the

Consider your verdict

In the case on page 26, the judge pointed out that giving a reference of character is purely discretionary. If an employer refuses to give one, he cannot be compelled to do so, whatever the consequences to the employee. Ronald lost his case. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)



"I think I'll have that up here"

afternoon, ending in a valley containing a long, scattered village. Outside a house about half-way down the valley, the column halted and dispersed; we were taken to a Korean house on the low, western slope which was already under occupation by twelve Chinese soldiers.

We lived in that house under close guard for five days. Graham had sufficient of a pack of cards to play three-card brag, and we played endlessly. During the third night, a Puerto Rican, named Morales, was brought in to join us. He had one special virtue in Graham's eyes: he did not smoke the tobacco scrounged from the Chinese.

On the evening of the fifth day, we were taken out of our prison and hurried away from the valley. At first, I was afraid that we were going back to the north, but we soon took a path that led south again.

We marched for about eight hours, halting frequently when the path became exceptionally crowded. Finally, just before dawn, we reached a village where we were billeted under a concrete bridge for the night. Sandwiched between fifteen North Korean soldiers, we went to sleep with the smell of garlic in our nostrils.

The next night we left the bridge and set off again—this time to the north-west. I was now becoming anxious to make an escape as soon as possible; we were getting progressively weaker, due to the poor and insufficient food, and I knew that we should need all our strength for the journey through the lines. We were taken up to another pass, over this, and up a side track to a huge old Buddhist monastery.

Good Hiding Place

It looked an excellent place to hide in, and I memorized its position with care. I think that our captors had hoped to billet themselves there, but the Chinese, who occupied positions in the hills above, did not seem anxious to have them.

Our final resting-place was a house in a village not more than a mile and a half down the road; we called it "Mother Reilly's," after the good-natured old Korean woman who lived in it. During the next day, she gave us what food she could spare—some old corn meal, which tasted of nothing but mould, but this was what she was living on herself.

Dusk saw us marching once more, the sign "3783" leading us along the route. The advance party had evidently been busy during the day. After continuing north-west for two miles, we turned due west again over a high pass that led us down into a large village in which the North Korean regiment we marched with was billeted.

Looking round, I decided that we had waited long enough to escape; I had expected, perhaps, too good an opportunity. Discussing the matter with Fox and Graham the next day, I said that we must make the next night but one a deadline for our break, unless some exceptional circumstances prevented it. They were only too happy to agree. As we discussed final details, I called Morales over and asked him if he wished to join us. He said that he would. The four of us now made ready.

☆ ☆ ☆

All is quiet; not even the sound of distant gunfire breaks the stillness tonight. On tiptoe, we leave the village, pausing every few yards to listen for sentries. Someone coughs nearby. We freeze in the shadows, waiting for a challenge or a step towards us. A voice calls out in Korean. We do not reply. Apparently, he is satisfied, for the challenge is not repeated.

We reach the foot of the hill and begin the ascent. As we climb higher, the wind catches at our hair and torn garments. Now there are torches flashing below—is our escape discovered? We hurry on, careless of the thorn bushes that scratch us as we force our way through them. Fox is calling me: "Sir, sir; we've lost Morales!"

I go back to look. There is no sign of Morales anywhere. I call his name quietly in the darkness; I go back through the bushes to the open slopes of the hill. The torches are still flashing below. We must go on. The inflexible rule of escapers, that an injured or lost man must be left, is invoked. Three of us continue the climb on to the wind-swept hill-top, hot, tired, breathless—but we are free again!

☆ ☆ ☆

The next day was wet and cold. For the first few hours we lay stretched out on the soaking grass under cover of the bushes, our bodies camouflaged. At last, reasonably sure that our efforts to cover our tracks from the hill-top had been successful, we rose to our feet, exercised until we had restored some of the circulation in our chilled limbs, and sought shelter up a small re-entrant. At about four o'clock, we went over our plans.

That night, we made for the monastery. At the bridge, where we turned left, there was a sentry—an idle fellow, who was smoking. We cut off to the left of the road, to come out on the track beyond him. We felt, rather than saw, the monastery steps at last, and climbed them to the huge building above.

For a short time, we rested in one of the many little rooms that ran off the main temple, then, growing bolder, began to explore the area. We were soaking wet and very cold.

In the kitchen of the big hut belonging to the caretaker—an old woman who had made an appearance during our previous visit—we found the embers of a fire. Sitting round this, I decided to take a chance, while it was still dark enough to cover our flight if the alarm should be given: I began to knock gently on the door of the old caretaker's living-room.

For some time, there was no reply. Then the door was flung open suddenly and she appeared with a shovel of hot coals in her hand—very plainly for use

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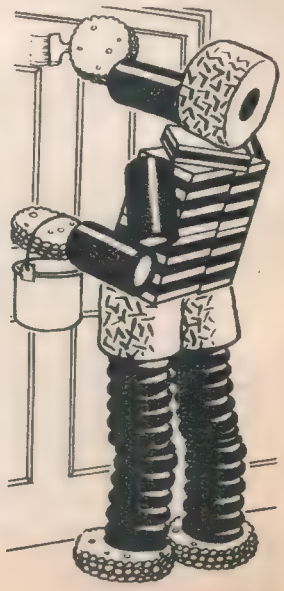

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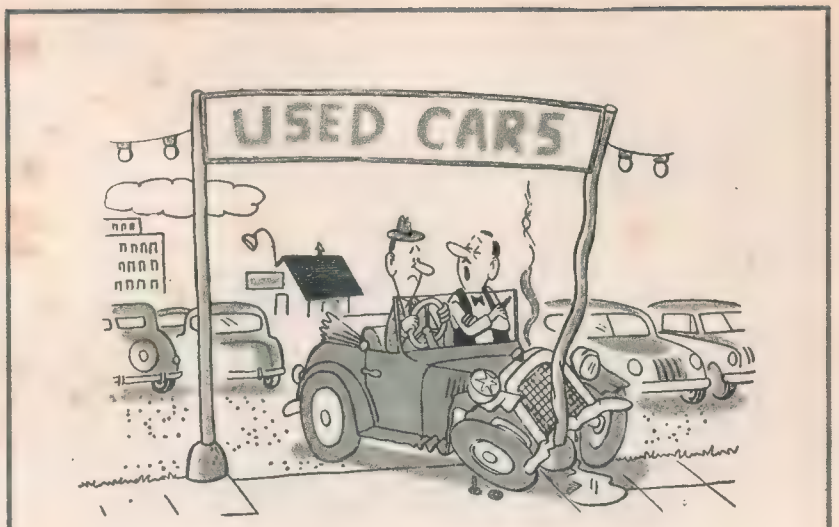

"Well, it looks as though you've just bought yourself a car"

as a weapon. She began to speak very quickly in Korean and her words were not words of welcome. I felt it was time we revealed our nationality.

"Yun-gook," I said, several times. "English."

She paused when she heard this, came forward cautiously, and peered into my face. My hopes rose as she put her shovel down and stepped down into the kitchen.

"Yun-gook?" she asked.

We all nodded, and she took a look at Fox and Graham. I am bound to admit that Graham's beard might have frightened anyone. In this case, it seemed to reassure her. She went back into her room, and reappeared with a small oil lamp, in the light of which she examined us all again.

Could They Trust Her?

Now that she was satisfied that we were friends, she became, in the same instant, fearful for our safety. She signed to us to sit down by the fire, put a finger to her lips, and went outside into the cold. Very naturally, Fox wondered if we were about to be betrayed to the Chinese, but I felt sure that she could be trusted.

In a few minutes, she returned with a girl of about fifteen and a boy a good deal younger. They had brought a considerable quantity of food with them. Hiding us in a toolshed on the other side of her living-room, she commenced to cook this with all speed. We ate a hearty breakfast, sitting behind some old boxes, and were ready to settle ourselves in this spot for the hours of daylight when the boy beckoned us through the door.

While the girl kept watch, he took us out across the main courtyard and into a temple, where, after darting to each door to ensure that we were not overlooked, he took out one of the huge wooden blocks that constituted the floor and disappeared below.

We all went over to the opening and looked down. Beneath us lay a wood store, filled with huge logs, doubtless cut during the previous winter. The whole room had been cut out of the hillside, two adjoining walls being built against solid earth, the other two opening on to a lawn below the caretaker's house.

Right in the centre, the boy had made a hideout for us, into which we descended. With tobacco and matches, an old blanket, and a bowl of fresh water from the stream, we were shut in for the rest of the day; three thoroughly contented men.

We rested and fed for two days. Each night I made a reconnaissance of the area. The more I saw, the more I became convinced that we were only a short distance north of the original positions held by the brigade earlier in the year. During the third day, alarmed by a North Korean police officer who had been snooping about the area, we withdrew on to a rock shelf at the back of the woodstore, seeking better cover among the tumbled mass of old beams, perpetually in deep shadow. Lying here, I briefed the other two on the journey that we should make that night.

Our normal evening meal of rice and beans appeared after dusk. By this time, I had written a certificate stating that the caretaker and her family had aided us during an escape, had thus placed herself in considerable personal danger for the sake of the United Nations' cause, and deserved a substantial reward. I felt that, should anything happen to us, the certificate would serve to reward her and to give some indication of our movements.

When we were ready to move, I decided to make a quick reconnaissance of the courtyards and path, and hand over the paper to the old lady at the same time.

I left my boots by the trapdoor in the floor of the temple and walked out in stockinged feet; for the courtyards were flagged with stone and, without boots, I could move swiftly over them.

It was now getting on towards midnight. I ran through the courtyard past the great stone images of Buddha, checked the path to see that no sentry had been left to watch it, listened by the wells and the gate that led back to the hill above. There was no sound. Quickly I ran over to the caretaker's hut and knocked at the door. When she saw who it was, she dowsed the lamp and admitted me quickly. I said: *"Comupsom-nida,"* and handed her the certificate, tapping it as I repeated the word of thanks.

I think she understood me, for she smiled and took it, tucking it away behind an old box in the corner. I was about to leave, when we heard footsteps outside the door and a voice hailed her. The door shook as a hand knocked heavily upon it.

Forced Their Way In

We looked at one another for a brief moment—a look of horror and surprise. She opened the door of the tool-shed and thrust me in, closing the door again at once. I watched the room I had left through a hole in the paper-covered wall, aware that my heart was beating wildly. The old caretaker had now opened her door and was temporizing with the callers: it was plain that they were insisting on coming in.

After a couple of minutes, they grew tired of the argument and forced their way into the room, throwing her to the floor as they entered.

There were four men: three soldiers and what appeared to be an officer, the latter carrying a drawn pistol in one hand, a torch in the other. I sprang behind the box in the corner.

I had just concealed myself when the door of the tool-shed was flung open and I saw the beam of the torch circling the room. The sound of boxes and other articles being kicked aside came to my ears. I knew that my turn was coming.

The box in front of me crashed to the ground, was removed and splintered by another mighty kick, and I lay exposed in the full light of the torch.

NEXT WEEK: I limp back to rejoin my captive colleagues

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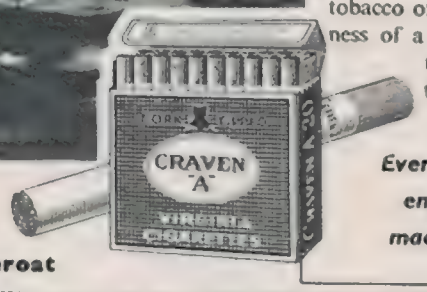

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ALIBI FOR MURDER

Continued from page 9

I'd been living a lie all our married life."

Grant asked steadily: "Why shouldn't Alice have known where the money came from?"

"Why, you know her. She's dead against gambling."

"I know that. But what——"

Venniker looked his friend straight in the face. "I won the money at the races, John," he said.

Grant stared back, incredulous. "But I've never known you make a bet."

"I'd never bet before, and I never have done since," Venniker said. "I gave Alice my word. But—well—she'd gone away for a while and I was as lonely and moody as blazes. A friend persuaded me to go to the races with him, over at Hampton Park. I remember it was April Fool's day. And I won a lot of money. It was mug's luck. I didn't know the first thing about horses, and I just picked two at random in different races, and they both won."

"A double," Grant said.

"That's what they called it. Then my pal persuaded me to pick another horse and put half my winnings on it. It was a rank outsider, but it won. That night I had over two thousand pounds in my pocket."

"Who was the pal?" Grant asked.

"Hugh Davies."

"Davies." Grant looked grim. "He died last year."

"That's right."

"What was the name of the bookmaker who took the bets?"

Venniker looked surprised. "Good Lord, John, it was thirty years ago," he said. "He was just a man with a bag."

"Well, the name of the horses. They'd be impressed on your memory."

Venniker closed his eyes, concentrating. "It's no use," he said. "It's too long ago."

"You've got to remember, Henry."

"But it's all too damn silly!" Venniker burst out. "Why in thunder do people have to stir up senseless trouble? Surely you believe me, John?"

Grant said solemnly, "Henry, if I believed you'd picked up Mrs. Merritt's money that night, friend or no friend, I'd pull you in. But I think your story's so incredible that, coming from a man like you, it could be true. But it's not what I think; it's what a jury would believe, that counts. I don't believe there's a jury in the world who could credit that a man who'd won two thousand pounds on three horses in a single afternoon could forget their names."

Venniker stared. "Then what can I do, John? What can anyone do when all he's got is the truth, and the truth's unbelievable?"

GRANT thought about it for a while. Then: "Look, Henry," he said. "I know it was a long time ago, but after all it was a day of days. Prove to me where you were on the night of April the first between eleven and eleven thirty, and I'll be satisfied. I'll be able to make a report that will put an end to the matter. It'll be over and done with, and Alice need never know."

Venniker said thoughtfully, "I know where I went that night, but I can't be sure of the times. I was with Hugh Davies."

Grant moaned. "Davies can't alibi you from the grave," he said.

"I can't help it. I can only tell you what happened. Hugh had an old car, and after the races we drove up to London and got pretty tight. We were very young. Then we started home. The fresh air sobered me up, and I began to worry about all the money I had on me. All I wanted was to get home. But Hugh had women on his mind. He wanted to go tearing off to Borston, where there were a couple of girls he thought he could get hold of. That finished me. I realized I wasn't playing the game with Alice. When we got to the cross-roads where Hugh wanted to turn off—it was the Whinley cross-roads—I made him drop me."

"And then?"

"Then I walked to Whinley Halt and waited for a train to Medstone. I can't remember what time I got back."

"I can remember this," Grant said gloomily. "You were living in digs in London Road—the road where Mrs. Merritt's body was found."

Venniker sank heavily down into his chair. His fingers drummed nervously on the arm-rests. "It's all so crazy, John," he said, "and everything I say seems to make it sound worse."

Grant said, "Henry—I'll tell you what I would do in your place. I'd take a bus out to Whinley tonight. Get there as near as possible to the time you think Davies dropped you there. Get out of the bus at the cross-roads. Walk to the station, and come back by train. It might wake something up. It can't do any harm, anyway."

VENNIKER was glad his wife was away. He couldn't get it out of his mind that Aggie Wills, under the guise of friendship, might warn her he was being questioned. John Grant, Venniker was sure, was convinced of his honesty. Left to old John. . . . But perhaps it wouldn't be left to John.

Sitting in the bus on his way out to the little village of Whinley, Venniker's forehead broke out into a cold sweat. Even if he cleared himself of suspicion, this business could easily mean the end of his happiness with Alice.

He got out at Whinley cross-roads. He walked down to Whinley Halt and wandered on to the deserted platform of the little station. He glanced at a time-table set under a light. Trains stopping at Medstone ran fairly frequently. But there must have been far fewer thirty years ago.

It was a fifteen-minute run to Medstone. If he'd left Whinley at eleven, he'd have had plenty of time to get back and pick up Mrs. Merritt's money. Somehow he'd got to prove he hadn't left Whinley before, say, eleven thirty.

He walked along the platform to the booking-office. Through the part-open door he saw a young porter leaning against the wall, a cup of tea in his hand. The porter was watching an old man who was sitting at a table building a scaffolding of matches. The builder was carefully adding a match to the foot-high structure when an express thundered through the station and the matchstick edifice collapsed on to the table.

"No good, Joe," the young porter said. "You'll never beat that record."

The old man stared at the ruins of his efforts. "Too many trains through nowadays, that's the trouble," he grumbled.

"Two foot six, wasn't it, you say you did once?"

"Two foot six and half an inch, by the rule."

The other laughed. "Reckon you're stretching it a bit, old 'un," he said.

The old man looked up. "Listen, son," he said. "Old Joe Gilpin don't tell lies."

Joe Gilpin! Venniker caught at the

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"I think I'm going to faint"

name. He walked up the platform and back, thinking furiously. He saw the young porter come out of the booking-office and walk away.

Venniker went into the booking-office. Grant had said the truth was hard to believe. Very well. He would find a false alibi that would look like truth and end his worry. With a bit of luck. . . .

Gilpin was lean and stooped and frail and incredibly old, and Venniker knew at once he'd never set eyes on him before. *But he had to make Gilpin remember him.*

He said, "Hallo, Mr. Gilpin. Still at the same old game?"

Gilpin's rheumy eyes looked at him, puzzled.

"My name's Venniker. Perhaps you don't remember it, but years ago I watched you put the last match to your two-foot-six pile."

"You did?" The old eyes lit up.

"I certainly did. Two foot six and half an inch it was, under the ruler. We measured it together. I remember it well, though it was a long time ago. Must be thirty years."

"Thirty years?" Gilpin said vaguely. "Was it as far back as that?"

"You were here in nineteen-twenty-three?" Venniker held his breath.

"Eighteen-eighty-five, nineteen-thirty-five," the old man said. It was a boast.

"That means you've retired now?"

"That's it. But I come down most evenings. I like to see how things are going."

"Well, you built that two-foot-sixer near the middle of twenty-three."

"I did?"

"It was the night of April Fool's day, and the year I got married. That's how I come to remember it."

"Well, damn me!" the old man said. He slapped his thigh. "Is that a fact? And you remembered! Just a minute, young fellow." His eyes squinted suddenly at Venniker. "You do look familiar. Older'n I recollect, though."

Venniker smiled. "Time doesn't stand still."

The old man slapped his thigh again. "You're right!" he exclaimed. "I remember it now. I can see us measuring her up just before the eleven thirty-two came through and busted her to jiggery."

ELEVEN thirty-two! Venniker was jubilant. He held out his hand. "It's been niceto see you again, Mr. Gilpin, after all these years."

The old boy couldn't get over it. "Fancy you remembering, young fellow," he said.

"Venniker's the name."

The old man nodded. "I remember that well enough now. I remember it because it's not a common sort of name."

It was with a light heart that Venniker caught the late local back to Medstone.

Venniker and Inspector Grant found old Gilpin at home in his cottage next day. He greeted Venniker like a bosom friend, remembering the match-building incident as though it had happened yesterday.

Grant was satisfied.

"Well, it's been a lucky day, Henry," he said as they drove back to Medstone.

As they turned into London Road, Venniker put a hand on the inspector's arm. "I've got you to thank, John," he said. "I'd never have thought of going out to Whinley. I'd have just sat at home and gloomed and got nowhere."

They were stopping at Venniker's gate when he caught the movement of curtains at the front window of Aggie Wills's house, which told him the old witch was snooping as usual. An impish spirit seized him. She'd built her suspicions on an April Fool's tragedy. Well, he'd give her April Fool comedy.

"We ought to celebrate," he said. "Come in and have a drink. Alice keeps it for medicinal purposes." He winked.

Grant said, "Well—yes, I'd like to."

They got out of the car. Venniker kept close to the inspector. The Wills woman would be watching and would think the worst. Inspector Grant was hot on the criminal's trail. About to arrest him, even.

Venniker's own telephone rang almost as they entered the house and, leaving Grant in the living-room, he went into the hall to answer it.

LEFT to his own devices for the moment, Grant looked about him, at the staid steel engravings, the heavy, respectable furniture, at Pepina the parrot, the one spot of colour in the room.

He stroked the soft neck of the parrot with his forefinger. He had known Henry a long time, and could remember Pepina alive. It made him feel old to remember, it was so long ago. And yet the parrot looked as young and fresh as on the day it died. Old Henry had done a good job there.

Grant removed the parrot from its perch, and heard, too late, the brittle snap of claw. Pepina was not meant to come off her perch. Claw and under-feathers were cunningly secured to the bar. Almost apologetically, he ruffled the green breast feathers, and in doing so noticed that he had also torn apart the stitching. Well, he thought, it probably needed re-stitching anyway, after more than thirty years.

Then, startled, he peered closer. It seemed as though the parrot was bleeding.

It was Alice on the telephone. Grant heard Venniker laugh and tell her to hurry home; heard him coming back from the hall.

"Sorry to keep you waiting for your drink," Venniker said.

Then he stopped, years piling on his shoulders as he stood there in the doorway. Grey came to his face to match his thinning hair as he saw Inspector Grant, almost as haggard as himself, standing by the fireplace with Pepina in one hand; and, on the open palm of the other, Mrs. Merritt's ruby.

THE END

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CHARTER TO DANGER

Continued from page 23

hopeful. "Personal spy, with quite a lot of the necessary equipment, if you like the type. Jet black hair and dark, burning eyes. Any information?"

"No. I don't know anything about her."

Jessel sighed and collected the photographs together.

"I came here hoping for a bit of easy evidence. I guess we'll have to keep the story on ice."

"You're holding out on us," Max charged him. "What's at the back of it? You don't work up a story because Merle-Florac visits London and then sends this woman to the Riviera. It doesn't make sense."

"The facts are plain for anyone to read," Jessel said. "Flavius is completing plans for a merger that will make him the controller of a vast international organization. The list of the companies involved is ready. Agreements are about to be signed. Flavius holds all the strings, and Flavius is kidnapped. When the news flash hits the ticker-tapes, there is alarm in many quarters. On the first day, things are panicky. Rumours spread that the merger will fail. The market is shaky. Prices fall."

"And somebody starts to buy?" asked Max.

"Precisely. It is only quiet at the moment, but it is organized. There is as yet no general unloading. When there is, someone's going to make a whacking big fortune if the merger goes through after all. The price will shoot up."

"So Merle-Florac gets himself in on the merger, grabs the list, and turns his private thugs loose on Flavius?" Max was more than sceptical. "My dear Paul!"

Jessel ignored the interruption. "My own view is that something has gone wrong with the original plan. Probably they just wanted to get Flavius out of the way for a few days, fake up a ransom demand to make it look good, buy up shares in the merger companies, and bring the old boy back to complete his deal. But the thing starts off with a case of murder, so what's more likely than that the thugs have got out of hand? In that case there'll be a real demand for ransom, and it won't be for pin money. You needn't look so surprised, Mr. Barnes. Margolies told me, off the record. I saw him in Paris last night."

"But he's here, in Cannes."

"He was in Paris all day yesterday. So was Merle-Florac. He had me thrown out of his hotel suite. Margolies agrees that the ransom is phoney."

Ross closed his eyes. He was groping, recalling Parra's questions about the ransom demand. The shrewd Jessel had hit the mark. Something had gone wrong with the plan. The hired hand had taken charge. He still had Flavius. What was more important to Ross, he still had Ralph.

And in his groping, Ross remembered the scene at the Hotel Alexandre, in the office when Inspector Guizet was examining the agitated Miss Blieke. . . .

"Mr. Jessel," Ross said. "I'd like to see a photograph of Marie Fournaise."

"Give me your address." Jessel pressed the button of his ball-point pen. "I return to Paris tonight. If I can find anything, I'll send it to you."

For the rest of the day, Ross was held by the fear that Laurent might call upon him at any moment to identify Alicia Mars. He suffered, too, a recurrent dread that the body of Jean Seyrac might be found and the man's relationship with Alicia uncovered.

"The woman is a damned fool," Max complained. "Why couldn't she have stayed here till I got home? I had a safe place fixed up for her."

Ross said nothing.

"What makes it worse, she had some idea that she could still help us," Max went on, working himself into a dark fury. "I talked to her before I left her. That scoundrel of a brother was in trouble some time ago and had to go into hiding. In a craft of some sort."

"It doesn't matter, so long as she's safe," Ross answered in a dejection near misery.

"Doesn't matter!" Max came near shouting in his indignation. "Are you in love with her that you can say such a thing?"

"Don't be absurd!"

Max glowered at him. "This brother and his accomplices hid themselves away in a tug or a barge. He did not tell her where, but there might be postmarks on his letters. The point is that they may have taken Flavius and the boy to the same spot."

"What?"

"I said to her, for God's sake, to find the envelopes. If we have to look for a tug or a barge, we must at least have a postmark. She said she would try to get hold of the letters. And what does she do? She panics and runs away, without so much as kissing you goodbye. Just like all these damned fool women."

Max had to have a drink before he could calm down.

Later, Ross was trying to write some sort of letter to Eleanor when Margolies telephoned. "I am just back from Paris," he said. "I want to see you most urgently, Mr. Barnes. Do you think you could manage to come to the Marinville for a few minutes?"

The voice had the sound of a tired man, and, when Ross was taken up to the luxury suite of the Flavius party, he found a very tired man. Caton Margolies was a wreck. He looked as if he had not slept for days. Overloaded bags dragged at the man's eyes, and his whole person presented an effect of weariness.

Miss Blieke and her shorthand notebook were waved into the background. Miss Blieke, too, was a living expression of strain. She appeared ill. She glanced at Ross in a frightened manner and quickly looked away.

Margolies shifted a litter of papers on his desk and handed Ross a sheet of typewriting.

"First of all, I want you to read that, Mr. Barnes," he said.

The message had the appearance of being typed on the same machine as the letter that had awaited Ross in Marseille. The only superscription was the day's date.

The message read:

"The demand previously made on you was without authority. This, as

RAFFLES

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you will see, has a genuine endorsement. It must be followed in every detail and disclosed to no one but Mr. Barnes, who will receive from you, unopened, the enclosed instructions. You will hand to Mr. Barnes the hundred thousand Swiss francs which you have ready. You will then collect a further 500,000 Swiss francs in thousand-franc notes and wait for further instructions. If there is any failure, either by you or Mr. Barnes, the responsibility for what happens to Mr. Flavius and the boy, Ralph Peters, will be yours."

A scrawl penned in the margin was certainly an endorsement.

Caton,—See that everything is done as ordered. This is the only hope for me and the boy.—Vince.

Margolies blinked his tired eyes. "That is unquestionably the handwriting of Mr. Flavius. Here is the enclosure."

Ross took the sealed envelope and opened it. Another typed sheet told him what he had to do and warned him, with a repetition of menaces, that he must say no word to anybody.

It was clear to him now, very clear, why Parra wanted him alive. He folded the sheet.

"You are not to see this," he told Margolies.

The tired man nodded. "When will you want the money?"

"It has to be delivered tomorrow. If it's ready, and you will trust me, I'd better take it with me tonight."

Margolies unlocked a cupboard and took out a large brown-paper envelope. "The notes are in this," he said. "You have your instructions."

"In what way did the demand reach you?" Ross asked.

"By ordinary letter. It was posted in Nice, but I don't think that means anything." Margolies looked across at Miss Blieke. "Madeleine, tell Delbert to drive Mr. Ross to his door."

IN the morning, the sun in a cloudless sky promised another hot day. "I'm going for a walk in the country," Ross said. Max looked curiously at the brown-paper envelope.

"It is not your lunch you are carrying?"

"I can't tell you anything about it."

"All this mystery tells me enough." Max was anxious. "There will be danger."

"No."

"What makes you so sure?"

"I'll be making a second trip in a day or so."

"If you will let me know where and when the money is to be handed over, it may be possible to see something from the sky. I could track a car to its destination."

"I believe Ralph is alive and safe, Max. That's how he has to stay. Don't ask me any more questions, and don't try to follow me. I have to work to a plan and say nothing to anybody."

There was a timetable of a sort, as well as a plan. Ross observed every detail.

At eleven o'clock he found a taxi in front of the station and ordered the driver to take him up the boulevard Carnot to Le Cannet. He paid the man off at the junction of the road to Grasse and started to walk along the highway, leaving Le Cannet behind him.

When he had passed the last of the houses and come out on the shoulder of the hill, he could see a wide stretch of country with the road clearly visible until it curved round the conical elevation topped by the walled village of Mougins. The road ran on between acres of jasmine and fields of dark-trunked olives.

The terrain was admirably suited to the purpose, for the road could be kept under observation from a dozen points. Parra might believe in the strength the hostages gave him, but he was taking no chances.

Ross tramped on at a steady pace towards Mougins. Far ahead of him, he could see the town of Grasse perched high against the white and silver background of the Alpes Maritimes. A car or two raced towards Cannes. He passed a few houses. Then, at the junction of roads below Mougins, he looked for a white stone on his right. It was a small cleft stone, his landmark; he found it easily. He pushed the envelope into some thick undergrowth behind it and walked on. He walked all the way to Mouans-Sartoux. He had a drink and a light meal, then waited for the train back to Cannes.

His job was finished.

MAX arrived home early in the afternoon. He announced that he had been to the Café des Lauriers for lunch. "An abominable place," he commented. "I suffered, but I had an idea I would like to take a look at your friend the proprietor. By a curious coincidence, he was absent."

"Where is the curious coincidence?" Ross asked.

Max went on as if he had not heard. "I inquired about him and was told he was out on business. I began to wonder if his business had taken him into the country. He turned up about two thirty. Would that be all right for time?"

"I don't know. Did you think I might have come across him? I saw nobody. What made you go to the café?"

"It interests me. It is so peculiarly close to the rue Tunis, and somebody must have been keeping an eye on Jean Seyrac. And on his visitors. I do hope that fool of a girl has not run into trouble. If we do not hear from her very soon, I think we should go to your friend Laurent with the whole story."

"Why should we hear from her?" Ross was bitter about it. "I have a feeling that if she is free, she is looking for those old letters from her brother."

By the late mail an envelope came from Paris with a photograph. It showed Marie Fournaise boarding a train with Merle-Florac. The picture of the noble financier was a little indistinct. That of the woman was excellent. It showed a handsome face with wide-set eyes and prominent cheekbones, a large and slightly aquiline nose and full lips. It was the sort of face that even a moronic waiter should readily remember.

Ross took it at once to Laurent. The

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"Jimmy has some sort of surprise for you, I think, dear. He pestered me to give him a paper bag, and then rushed upstairs the minute he saw you coming up the road . . ."

expert from the Sûreté seemed a little dejected. He scowled and grunted. "The supposition is that Mademoiselle Blieke was with this woman in the café?"

"It could be. Mademoiselle Fournaise is dark."

"So is the Queen of Ethiopia, monsieur. I think you should realize that these matters of detection are best left in the hands of the professional."

"All I ask is that you should show the photograph to the waiter in the rue Flaubert. It is at least something to do while you are trying to find Miss Mars."

LAURENT fixed his small eyes on Ross in the slightly disdainful stare of the infallible professional. "Miss Mars has been found," he said. "She has written to the Casino from Italy. We are, at the moment, in touch with the Italian police."

"But the waiter is uncertain about her picture. He may be positive about this one. It will not take us long to go to Juan-les-Pins."

Laurent meditated a moment, grunted, then heaved himself out of his chair. "All right," he agreed. "There is no harm in seeing what the waiter has to say."

There were not many customers in the Bar Baraban. Laurent isolated the waiter and showed him the picture.

The man responded with an excited exclamation.

"But that is the woman!" he cried. "Undoubtedly that is the woman!"

They went straight back to the Marinville at Cannes, and took the lift to Miss Blieke's floor. The girl flinched visibly when she saw Laurent. "If you want Mr. Margolies, he isn't here," she said hopefully. "He had to go to Marseille. He will not be back before eight."

Laurent looked at his watch. "Then we will have a little chat while we wait. You know Monsieur Barnes. May we sit down?"

She assented with all the readiness of one who sees rack and thumbscrews ahead.

"I'm very busy," she said. "You'll have to excuse me."

"In a moment." Laurent's fat fingers fished for the photograph of Marie Fournaise in its envelope. "There is another little picture I want you to see."

"If it is Alicia Mars again, I have told you that I do not know her. I have told you again and again: there was no one with me in the bar."

Already the edge of hysteria was in her voice. Laurent paused deliberately, watching her. At last he said: "All I want you to tell me is the truth. Look at this picture."

She reached for the print with an unsteady hand. She held it close to her in an effort to control the trembling, but when she saw the face she was clearly shocked. For a moment she was without any control; she rocked back in her chair, closing her eyes tightly. Laurent waited.

At last she looked at him.

"Why do you show me a picture of Marie Fournaise?" she asked in a small voice.

"She is the one you met in the Bar Baraban when you had your cassis," said Laurent flatly.

"I met no one. Marie Fournaise was not there."

"You will find it difficult to deny the evidence of the waiter. He recognized the photograph at once. He is ready to swear to it." His voice had risen. He leant forward. "You left the bar with Marie Fournaise. You sent a message to Monsieur Flavius. He walked from the Hotel Alexandre in answer to that message. A few minutes later he was in the hands of the kidnappers."

"No, no!" Her voice rose to a scream. "I had nothing to do with it."

"You are going to tell me, perhaps, that it was Marie Fournaise who sent the note?"

"No."

"But you left the bar together. You admit that?"

She was rigid in the chair now. She closed her eyes as though against a fierce glare of light. Laurent repeated his words and waited. He was good at waiting.

"I admit nothing."

Laurent got on to his feet. "Very well, mademoiselle. You will come along with me to headquarters."

"No!" She was frantic. "You can't take me away. I haven't done anything wrong. What I did, I did under orders."

"You met Marie Fournaise under orders?" Laurent said softly.

An affirmative came jerkily between sobs.

The room door opened and Margolies walked in, back from Marseille. He stopped when he saw Miss Blieke and turned angrily on the inspector. "What the hell goes on now? I have already protested about your treatment of the girl. I'd like to know why you persist in asking her a lot of useless questions?"

INSPECTOR LAURENT gave his narrow collar a tug and straightened his white tie. "She has confessed," he said.

"Confessed what?" The note of incredulity in Margolies's voice suggested the thought that Laurent must be mad. He grasped the girl's shoulder. "Is this true, Mady?"

This time the affirmative was a drawn-out wail.

"She says she acted under orders," Laurent explained. "Whose orders? Were they yours, Monsieur Margolies?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. Mady, for heaven's sake stop crying! Who gave you orders?"

"Mr. Flavius. He—he told me I

Continued on page 39

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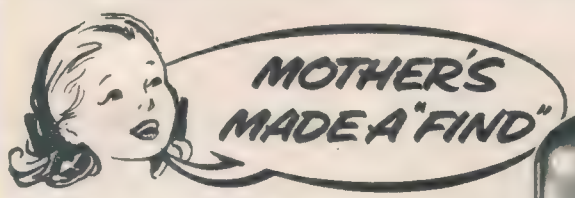

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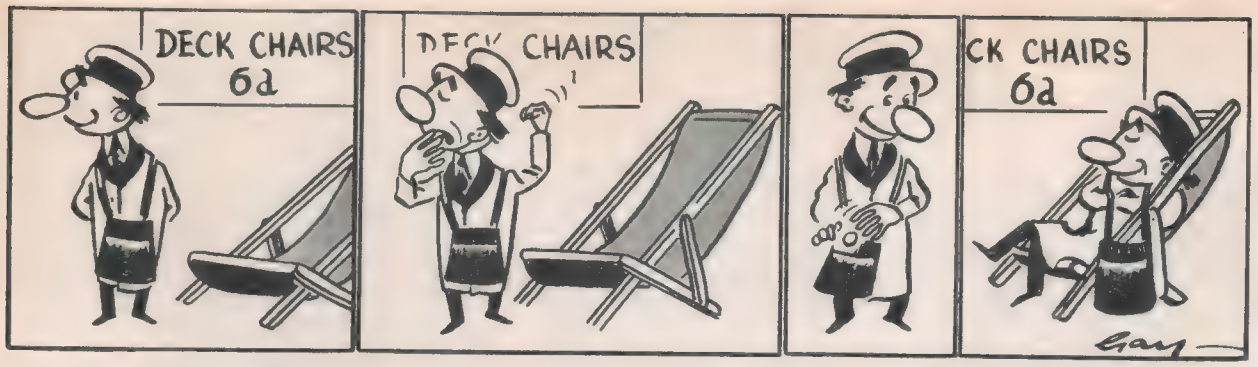

CHARTER TO DANGER

Continued from page 36

was not to say anything." She fumbled for a handkerchief and blew her nose. "Not to a living soul."

This was heresy or treason to Margolies. Something unbelievable. His grip on the girl's shoulder caused her to wince, but she must have taken some assurance from it. The few sobs that followed were her last.

"What am I to do, Caton?" she pleaded. "He made me promise. Not even to you, he said."

"That's past," Margolies decided. "You should have told me at once. You must tell us everything now."

She was relieved. The whole thing had been a heavy burden, wearing her down. Now that Margolies was ready to take the responsibility, she could not get the story out fast enough.

It began in Nice, where Marie Fournaise was on vacation, waiting to join Merle-Florac in Juan-les-Pins. She had met Marie a year before and they had become friends of a sort. And Marie made her the confidante of all her troubles.

Marie was very unhappy. Merle-Florac had treated her badly. If she could get another job, she would leave him flat.

Mady had a lot of spare time in Nice, so she saw Marie nearly every day. They bathed together, dined, went to the films. Mr. Flavius saw them together. Mr. Flavius was quite observant. He remembered Marie, because there had been some preliminary conferences with Merle-Florac the year before.

"If she ever talks about her boss," Mr. Flavius said, "just listen to what she says."

This was not a nice situation. A girl had to be loyal to her employer. She also had to be loyal to her friend, even if the friend was a bit of a fool and sometimes rather a bore. Mady listened, but reported nothing. There was really nothing to report. It was just that Merle-Florac was a brute and as mean as a miser. Poor Marie had to work for a pittance and yet she was expected to dress like a couturier's model.

After several more days, Mr. Flavius had a heart-to-heart with Mady. He had heard rumours about the financial affairs of Merle-Florac. He wasn't satisfied that Merle-Florac was a good risk for the merger, and here was a heaven-sent opportunity to do a little pumping. He instructed Mady what to say, the sort of questions to ask. Mady still hadn't liked it, but just about then Marie began to throw out hints. There was a lot she could let out if she cared to open her mouth.

"She said she had seen the books," Miss Blieke added. "She often had to make entries in the private ledger. Naturally, I told Mr. Flavius."

"And he fell for it, the damned old fool!" Margolies exploded. "Couldn't he see that you were being led? It serves him right. By heaven, it does. If he'd said only a word to me. . . ."

"One moment, please!" Laurent interrupted him. "Go on, mademoiselle."

Miss Blieke was too shocked by Margolies's outburst to go on. "Caton!" she protested.

Caton was in a fury that would not be stayed. "For years I've run this goddam business for him—and he has to do this behind my back. He can fry in his own stew. Fry!"

Laurent remained a monument of calmness. "Go on, mademoiselle."

"I had to take an offer to Marie." The girl hesitated, as if she saw that what she had to say was going to bring trouble for her. "Mr. Flavius would give her a job in New York if she could supply him with figures. She agreed, and arranged to meet me at the Bar Baraban the night we arrived in Juan-les-Pins. She said it was too dangerous for us to have any contact at the hotel. When I met her she said she wouldn't have the figures till the next day. She also wanted to be sure that Mr. Flavius would pay for her to fly to New York before Merle-Florac could suspect her. We didn't stay long in the bar. We walked along the front for a while. Then she said I had better start back to the hotel ahead of her. When I went upstairs after dinner, there was no one in the sitting-room, so I thought Mr. Flavius had gone to bed."

"And you didn't suspect anything next morning?" Margolies howled the question at her. "Why didn't you tell the police as soon as they came?"

"I couldn't think. I was frightened. It didn't seem possible that Marie could have had anything to do with it. When I heard about the note, I began to wonder, but Mr. Flavius had been very strict about the order to say nothing.

"Then I got more and more frightened. I thought I would be accused of sending the note to get him out of the hotel."

"Look at me, mademoiselle," Laurent demanded. "Did you say that you did not write any sort of note to Monsieur Flavius?"

"I swear I didn't."

"Supposing you did? Supposing you had written that Marie Fournaise had the figures and wanted him to come for them? Would he have come?"

"Most likely, yes."

"If Marie Fournaise had sent him a note?"

"I don't know. I don't think so."

"Did you ever write any letters to her?"

"Yes. After we met last year, we exchanged letters. I wrote to her from New York."

Margolies broke in, his wrath little abated. "So they had all they needed to fix up a forged note. And all their elaborate plans depended on whether he would swallow the bait."

Laurent grunted. "No doubt they had an alternative. More dangerous, perhaps. More violent. This was the easy way, and the victim did, in fact, swallow the bait. If he hadn't, they would have lured him into some corner somewhere. If we assume that Merle-Florac was behind the business, he would have had resources."

"Assume?" Margolies looked as if he were in danger of a seizure. "Who could have been behind it but that damned double-crossing scoundrel? Go after him, man! Arrest him, before he can get away."

"It is a little difficult without proof."

"Look! He's been fighting me in the market ever since it happened. That was the motive: hold up the merger operation by getting Flavius out of the way, then buy, buy, buy. Buy merger shares all along the line, buy up everything with the name of Flavius in it. I suspected the Merle-Florac interests from the start. Now I'm certain. He was out to make millions, but I've beaten him. He didn't know that I was the real Flavius, ready to throw in the last cent against him. He's finished now. You've got him tied hand and foot. Kidnapping, murder. . . ."

Laurent interrupted the excited flow with a surprisingly swift gesture for him.

"We cannot go into a court of law with theories," he objected, "any more than we can find the prisoners of the plot by sticking a pin in a map."

"Get Merle-Florac and you'll soon know where Flavius is."

"No." Laurent shook his head. "This thing has slipped from the hands of the instigator. He has lost control to the criminals he employed for his purpose. If he had not, Monsieur Flavius would have been released by now. I am not for nothing the expert of the Sûreté in affairs of finance. I have been watching the markets; without your inside knowledge, but with enough of my own. By last night the fight was lost, yet Monsieur Flavius is still held. At any moment now, you may expect a real demand for ransom."

Margolies jerked his head back nervously, as if the reminder had come as a jolt. "I have already had it." He spoke more soberly and glanced at Ross. "A first instalment was paid today."

Laurent picked up that glance. "By Monsieur Barnes?" he asked. "This is interesting. He, too, has a hostage in the enemy camp."

"I am not going to discuss it. Neither is Barnes."

"Just one question, if you please. There was no contact?"

"The demand came by mail."

Laurent's gaze moved to Ross.

"There was no contact," Ross said.

"An instalment," Laurent mused. "This will go on and on. As long as the golden eggs are laid, the goose will be kept alive. . . . Mr. Margolies, I will use your telephone. It is a direct line?"

"Yes."

Laurent called the operator. "Inter-urban communication, please." The others watched him as he hung ponderously over the instrument, giving instructions for an urgent official call to the Sûreté Nationale.

When he got through, he demanded to speak to Inspector Saval. He grunted, then spoke sharply. "Saval? Jean-Louis Merle-Florac will be at his usual hotel, no doubt. All his movements are to be watched. Also, you will locate Marie Fournaise, one of his secretaries. She is to be kept under close surveillance. Be ready to bring her in for questioning as soon as I reach Paris. . . . Yes. I will see you in the morning. That is all."

"That is all," he repeated when he put down the receiver. "I will be back in Cannes tomorrow night, if I can catch a plane."

Ross stayed for a word with Margolies. He walked home, making a circuit to take a look at Roselle. She was safe, guarded by a man in uniform. She would stay there at her berth until she was delivered back to him. In a matter of days, perhaps, but he found no pleasure in the thought. There would be no Tiny Kane to start up the engines; no Ralph to give the brasswork a wipe or hang out a shirt on a rigged line.

He turned away hastily. When he opened the door of the flat in the rue des Etats-Unis, he realized that Max had a visitor. He hesitated, but Max called to him eagerly to come in.

The visitor was Alicia Mars.

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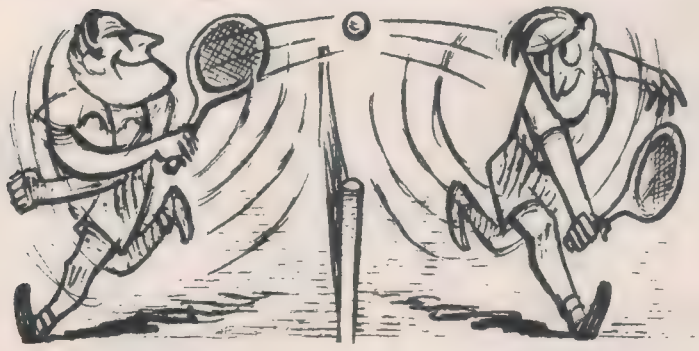

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THE DREAM OF FATHER O'REILLY

Continued from page 13

chancel steps. At the second step he halted, paralysed.

With a sonorous crash which filled all the air, sound dropped on him, crushed him, as the first bell of the carillon pealed. The noise was deafening in the empty church. It robbed him of the will to move. But he had to move. He must get the other candlestick.

Shaking with fright, he grasped the candlestick and turned and ran. The bells were still pealing and pealing above his head.

The church door was slightly open. He slipped out. A dark shape with flying feet and cumbersome long garments was rushing at top speed up the steps. Peppito almost cried out. Drew himself back in the shadows.

But the shadows would be no protection to him when the figure came closer. The night seemed full of rushing black shapes, and pealing, clangorous bells. Peppito turned and fled back through the door, and along the left aisle.

Panting, he slipped into the vestry. It had a small window high at the back. And it was open. The moon was beginning to glimmer through it as it got free of the clouds.

Peppito pushed a table underneath and climbed. He threw the candle through the window first and then the candlestick. He hauled himself up to the sill, and, as the lights sprang on in the church, he climbed over and dropped.

Behind a rosemary bush he found the candle. The candlestick lay glinting in the moonlight near a clump of celandines. Clutching one in each hand, and sobbing for breath, he tiptoed away from the church. He knew that in some way he had set the bells tolling. In darkness, the air full of chimes was worse than a dead silence.

He made a small detour of the main highways, but when he reached the built-up streets again he stopped dead in amazement. The houses, all of them, row upon row, had come awake. Lights blazed everywhere. A great noise of activity was rising to join the sound of the clamouring bells.

Peppito made himself walk down the street at a steady pace. At Tanta Rosa's window he saw a face peering in candlelight. The searching eyes brushed along the street and Peppito halted. Tanta Rosa's anxious face disappeared, but Peppito waited in case she looked out again.

In the small dark room, Tanta Rosa was looking for her best hat. She never went to church without it. She'd never been roused from her bed by the church bells before: usually she was up in plenty of time. She held the candle to the clock and muttered in vexation. The thing was stopped at 3.30. It was so dark outside . . . a heavy storm brewing.

PEPPITO walked on. Phillipo the cowman was rushing along on his bike like a madman, ringing his bell furiously. He shouted at Peppito to get out of the way. He was late for work. Usually he had all the cows milked by the time the church bells rang for early mass. . . .

Now people were beginning to come out into the street and shout to their neighbours in alarm. Why was it so dark? Was the church on fire? Had there been an earthquake?

With relief, Peppito realized that he'd almost reached the rolling green spaces. Then he saw his friend Ciano coming towards him along the street.

"Hi, Peppito, what do you think it is? Mamma says it's an earthquake warning. What have you got there? Afraid to come out in the dark without a candle? And you've got a candlestick— Hey, Peppito——"

Peppito ran. Soon, very soon, he was within sight of home. The cottage lights were ablaze. Peppito disappeared first into the empty stone barn that was in the field where they kept the chickens. Then, without the candle or the candlestick, he crept back home, climbed on to the privy shed and in by the window.

"Did you get it?" Georgio's voice whispered in the darkness.

"Yes, I've left it in the barn." Peppito climbed into bed and covered his head to shut out the sound of the bells.

Meanwhile, Father O'Reilly was holding an impromptu service which a number of his parishioners seemed to be expecting.

Father Nicola was banging furiously on electrician Paolo's door. Paolo seemed very reluctant to show his face and put right the carillon which he'd set for pealing once only. . . .

About ten o'clock the following morning, Father O'Reilly was in his garden, cutting down vines which over-grew beyond their allotted space. It was very peaceful this morning in the garden. Behind him he heard a sound. He thought it would be Father Nicola, who'd come to try to mend the breach between them. He turned.

It was Ciano, his small, fat face smugly excited. "Father, Father—I don't know if you've lost anything, but Peppito has a brass candlestick just like the one you have in church. I saw him with it last night."

"Peppito Borciani," repeated Father O'Reilly. "Hmm, well indeed."

Ciano hopped expectantly, waiting.

"And what are you waiting for, Ciano? Not expecting me to give you something, are you?"

Ciano's wide, eager eyes showed plainly what he expected.

"For telling tales?" Father O'Reilly asked softly, and raised his brows.

Ciano fled.

As he walked up by the bean fields and the olive groves, Father O'Reilly had no heart for the task ahead of him. He had great admiration for Signora Borciani, who was a fine, hard-working woman. He caught sight of her now in the distance feeding the hens in the field adjoining the cottage.

He was very fond of the two boys; often he had watched Peppito pulling Georgio in his wheelchair up the white steps of San Pietro.

He felt the sun very hot to his head as he walked over to the boys' mother.

"I've come to see Peppito," he said, after greeting her.

"He's playing in the barn with Georgia." She nodded towards it.

Father O'Reilly walked over to the barn. There was a sound very much like singing coming from inside, punctuated with the sorrowful bleatings of a goat. He gently pushed the door open and peered inside.

On a tall, wide box, against the far side wall, an old grey blanket was draped. Standing on this in dignity at each end were the two gilt candlesticks, with candles lit. In the middle was a wooden cross which might be found in any of the homes in the village.

They had not seen him. Peppito, and Georgio in his wheelchair, were singing lustily. The goat bleated, and Flippio the mongrel dog, and a few chickens were sitting in obedient

"We won it"

dignity behind the two boys. They were all facing the altar and Father O'Reilly was struck by the urgency and earnestness of the scene. This was no game they were playing.

The singing ceased. Father O'Reilly called Peppito before the constriction in his throat had the better of him. Peppito came out blinking in the sun, his eyes set on Father O'Reilly's face.

Father O'Reilly decided to start at the beginning.

"Those are the candlesticks and chalice from the church of San Pietro, Peppito."

Peppito nodded, and gulped. "I was going to bring them back before Sunday, Father." His voice threatened to crack in panic. His eyes never left Father O'Reilly's face.

"But didn't you think Father Nicola and I might be wondering where they were?"

Tears became visible and then Peppito began to sob in loud gasps. He pushed two dirty fists in his eyes to stop the unmanly tears from falling. "We wanted to have some services for Georgio—to ask for his legs to be put better—and it wasn't any use unless it was real. You know what you've said Father—'when two or three are gathered together. . . .'"

Father O'Reilly pulled Peppito's dirty fists out of his eyes. "But why couldn't you come to church for the services?"

Peppito turned towards the barn. "It hurt Georgio when I pulled him up the steps in the wheelchair."

Father O'Reilly spoke softly. "You should have spoken to me. Father Nicola can carry Georgio up those steps."

Peppito smiled brilliantly at Father O'Reilly. "But Father, Georgio will be able to walk himself soon, now, won't he?"

Father O'Reilly opened his mouth and closed it again. When next he spoke his voice was scarcely above a whisper. "Come, Peppito," he said. "We'll say another prayer in your little church, and then I must take back to San Pietro what belongs to it."

WHEN Father O'Reilly arrived back in the vestry at San Pietro, with the candlesticks, the chalice and the thurible, he saw that Father Nicola was there.

He spoke before the young priest had a chance to say a word. "Now if you're for asking me where I found them, I won't be telling you. I'll be telling you somewhere else entirely where I didn't find them. And if I did that, so I'd be telling you a lie, wouldn't I?" His stern gaze fixed on Father Nicola. "And Father Nicola," he asked, scandalized, "are you standing there and asking me to tell a lie?"

"No," answered Father Nicola meekly.

Father O'Reilly left the articles with Father Nicola and made his way down the steps again. He walked slowly in the hot sun. There was a long patch of shade in the approach to his house, and he crossed over to it. More than ever today he could imagine the bog road of Ballincarra beneath his feet.

Sighing gently, he went into his study and sat at his desk and opened a drawer. In a small japanned box there was his wallet, and inside it a bundle of notes. He counted the notes carefully. Enough for the fare; quite enough for the fare to Ballincarra.

He jotted down a figure on a scrap of paper and locked away the money. Then he went out into the street again. But now the feel beneath his feet was no different from always. *Ah, Ballincarra,* he said to himself, *I shall see you no more.* But at this moment there was no tinge of regret in the thought.

Just once in a lifetime, perhaps, it was given to a man to be the direct agent of a miracle. Somewhere a surgeon waited to fulfil his rôle in it. It was a foolish whim to go back to his boyhood. Better by far for a crippled boy to go forward to a new life, for faith to be rewarded. . . .

Goodbye, Ballincarra, said Father O'Reilly, once and for all, and he stepped out of the shade into the hot sun of Tommaso. THE END

SOS—AND THE FLYING DOCTOR SPEEDS TO THE RESCUE

Continued from page 11

touched down. Fortunately, the land was firm. Vickers's feeling of relief turned to anger, however, when he examined the man. "He had a touch of flu, otherwise he was just lonely. And that trip could have cost us our lives. He was very apologetic when I blew him up."

Every month, Vickers tours isolated communities without doctors of their own. In each place, he holds clinics, immunizes children and treats the less seriously ill in local hospitals. "In this way, diabetics and people with pernicious anaemia can live in the outback. If I can see them once a month to adjust their insulin dose or to give an injection of liver extract, they're just as well off as they would be in a city."

In the last two years he has diagnosed two early cancers which could be cured at that stage. "If those people had to pay to fly four hundred miles to show an insignificant lump to a doctor, they would never have gone."

Dr. Audrey's Round

After twenty-two years as a flying doctor, Vickers finds his clinical trips as much a matter of routine as the city practitioner his daily rounds. But to a doctor new to this sort of work there are many problems. Some of them had to be solved on Dr. Audrey Halloran's first clinical trip from Cloncurry, Northern Queensland. A twenty-six year old girl with blue eyes and a curly fringe, Dr. Halloran has a practice covering a quarter of a million square miles.

Setting off early in the afternoon, pilot Phil Allen flew her first to Strathfield, a floodbound station, where a sick woman urgently needed medical supplies. "In the previous two days, we'd made three attempts to reach her," says Audrey, "but the weather was too bad." This time they made it. As Allen swooped down to a hundred feet, Audrey pushed the specially packed bundle through the dropping hatch.

After refuelling at Cloncurry, they flew 185 miles north to Normanton, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, dropping mail at three floodbound stations on the way.

At Normanton Hospital, sixteen people were waiting at a clinic. "There was nothing serious," says Audrey. "An old man wanted me to cut a tiny cyst on his face, but I refused because the scar would have been unsightly." There was a woman with wax in her ears and a man with an infected hand. Since infected hands are dangerous in the tropics, Audrey decided to bring him back to Cloncurry Hospital when she returned.

Natives Were Afraid

Audrey spent the night at the hospital. Next morning, Allen flew her to Croydon, seventy-five miles away, where she took another clinic and had lunch. In the afternoon she flew another 165 miles to the Mitchell River Mission on the Cape York Peninsula.

"A sister had died recently in the hospital there," says Audrey, "and the aboriginals refused to enter it. I had to see a sick aboriginal woman who had had a still-born child. She was lying on a low plank in a dark, grass hut. I decided to take her to Cloncurry Hospital."

At her clinic that afternoon, Audrey learned her first lesson in aboriginal psychology. "A sixty-five year old woman had a complicated goitre which could be improved by hospital treatment. But she was petrified at the idea of flying. And she was afraid we would give her chloroform." Audrey asked the head of the mission to persuade her to come.

"That would be the worst thing to do," he said. "She'd think we were trying to force her and would disappear into the bush." That evening, as they were having tea, the woman's daughter told Audrey that her mother was packing her things. "We managed

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'STICK-A-SOLES' & HEELS

This man debunks women's intuition

HE was a nice chap. But he would have none of me. "Different?" he snorted. "What's *different* about it? D'you inhale it, suck it, spread it on kippers, or what?" "No," I said, hurt-like, "you just put it on a brush."

"Oh no!" he groaned. "Not that! They bring out some new tooth whitener every day. Twice nightly and matinees. This one makes your teeth shine like the Maharajah of Mogador's pearls. That one makes your breath smell like a Hollywood boudoir. And so it goes on. No, Sir. No more for me. I've got so many toothpastes already the shelves look like a street of prefabs."

"NOW look," I pleaded. "I told you this one was *different*." I unscrewed the cap and showed him. Deep ruby red. Rich, beautiful, velvet-smooth.

His eyes glinted. "To me it's just another toothpaste—and that's seventeen too many, believe me. Red? Why, in the name of McCarthy, RED? Of all the idiotic colours!"

"Because *decyl-carminate* is red!" *My* turn to score. So I poured out my sales blurb—decyl-carminate, amazing new discovery by NEW YORK scientist for whitening teeth...

He broke in. "And I suppose the name of this paragon of pearl polishers is as absurd as its colour?"

"LESS!" I cracked back. "It's called 'LESS Toothpaste.'"

"Ah, well," he smiled. "A rose by any..."

My turn again. "You use *less* of it. A blob the size of a pea whitens and polishes teeth like..."

"This is where I came in," he quipped. "Look, I understand women. Women don't buy on fancy names, clever packages, or glorious technicolor. Nor on intuition, as a lot of people think. Women work on *common sense*—they want value, quality, economy..."

"Well!" I bounced back, "that's the very point I've been arguing..."

"Arguing's right!" he grinned, "you're telling me! If I could have got a word in edgeways I'd have told you I've been selling 'LESS' all along! Trouble is I can't get enough of it. Where's your order book, chum?"

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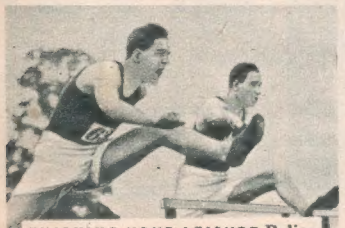

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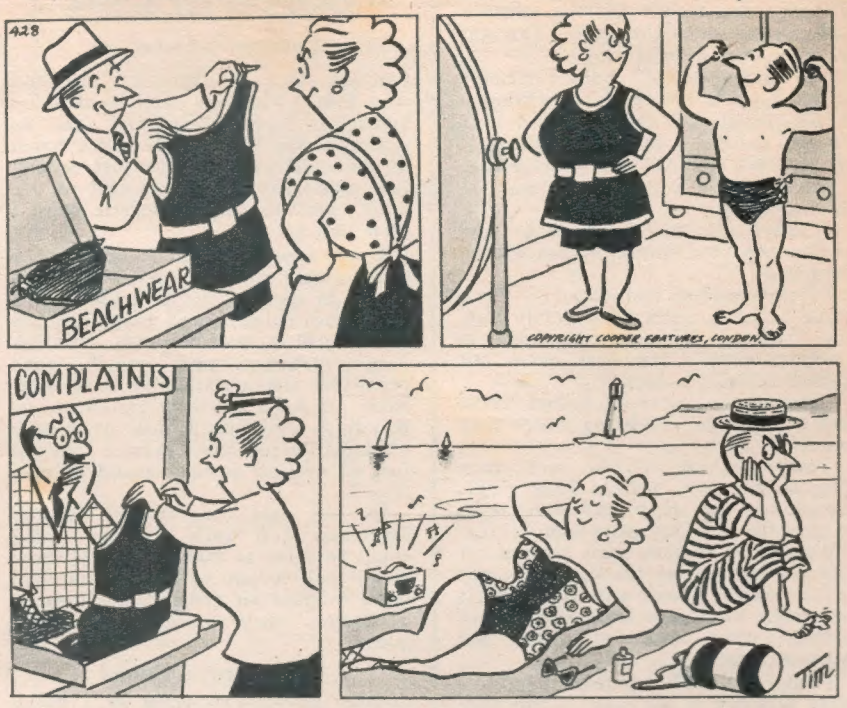
OH, JOHNNY! — *by TIM*



to stop her leaving," says Audrey, "but it showed I'd already put on too much pressure."

Early next morning they flew the sick mother back to Normanton, where they were asked by the post office authorities if they would look for a linesman missing in the floods. "I said we would," says Audrey, "but after breakfast I had a radio call that a child was sick at Doomadgee Mission, 130 miles to the west."

Taking the man with the infected hand, she flew to Doomadgee, picked up the sick child and returned to Cloncurry. It was now seven o'clock on Sunday night, and she had been away seventy-two hours. After a quick meal she drove to the hospital and treated her three patients. Although it was midnight when she got to bed, she was taking medical calls on the radio at seven o'clock next morning.

Like Audrey, Vickers held his first Flying Doctor appointment at Cloncurry. Graduating from Sydney University in 1926, he at first sought as varied an experience as possible. He took on several locums, worked in a large country hospital, in a sanatorium and even took a post in New Guinea.

Though he was mildly interested in the Flying Doctor Service and had even met the man who founded it, the Rev. John Flynn, of the Australian Inland Mission, he had never thought of joining it himself. Just before he set sail for a visit to Japan, however, he bumped into Flynn in the street.

"Flynn whisked me off to his office and talked me blind," says Vickers. "Flying Doctor funds were low and the present doctor at Cloncurry was leaving. He thought I was just the man to take his place." Vickers cancelled his trip to Japan and took a train to Cloncurry.

Refused To Give In

He made his first medical flight in a tiny biplane with a single water-cooled engine. Landing on a claypan 160 miles away, he brought back a woman who desperately needed an operation. That, and similar flights, convinced him that Flynn's idea was sound. "I saw that if I left Cloncurry the whole scheme would fail. I decided to stay."

For nine months he struggled on, raising money locally for the heavy cost of the service. At the end of that time Flynn himself made a special journey to Cloncurry to break the news to Vickers that the service was heavily in debt: it would have to close down.

The eager young doctor refused to listen. Jabbing excitedly at a map on the wall of his office, he demonstrated to Flynn that the service literally meant life or death to sick people in the outback. Suddenly, Flynn was carried away by a new idea: "Could you talk to a public meeting as you've been talking to me?"

Later, Vickers went to Sydney. "Here's your programme," said Flynn, handing him two closely typed foolscap sheets.

As Vickers swept through southern Australia, money poured into the Flying Doctor fund. By the time he had worked his way back to Sydney, Flynn was able to tell him that more than £4,000 had been collected—and more was coming in. In Brisbane, Vickers had a telegram from the Prime Minister of Australia asking if he would address a meeting of both Houses of Parliament. "Two hundred members turned up. I left Canberra with a federal subsidy of a thousand a year for the service."

Letter From Premier

Vickers was able to return to Cloncurry as a flying doctor. "We were out of debt and firmly on our feet," he says. After three years the Queensland service was well organized and Vickers thought it a good time to take up the offer of a fellowship to study surgery in Britain. "I was about to leave when I had a letter from the Premier of Western Australia. He wanted me to start a Flying Doctor Service over there. I agreed to—for one year only. I stayed five."

It was now 1939. Vickers joined the Australian Army. Soon he was a colonel in a 1,200-bed hospital at Perth, but in 1943 pressure of work broke his health. He took over the new Flying Doctor base of Charleville when it opened in 1943. He stayed until 1953, when his health again gave way and he was ordered not to fly. In spite of this, he insisted on flying when, temporarily, he could not find a suitable doctor for the Charleville post.

"It's not merely a question of being a good doctor," he says. "The right man must also be able to get along with the bush folk." His earthy, sincere manner has been largely responsible for his own success. Apart from a few who, like him, feel a vocation for the work or, like Jake Jarrett, prefer the bush life, most ambitious young doctors are not willing to enter the service except for a short period for experience or adventure.

Although his early plans to study surgery in Britain have been upset, the Nuffield Foundation recently awarded him a fellowship of £1,200, which he intends to spend in furthering the work of the F.D.S. in Britain. A practical visionary, he intends to canvass in influential quarters the idea of a Commonwealth F.D.S.

"Australia needs good neighbours in S.E. Asia," he says. "A few thousand pounds spent on starting a Flying Doctor Service would come back a hundredfold in goodwill." THE END

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4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in *"Bullets" Bulletin* dated July 17 and in JOHN BULL dated July 24), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.
(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, July 10, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,942 result.)

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Vegetables

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PLANT GROWTH TABLETS

GET THEM FROM ALL CHEMISTS, CO-OPS, IRONMONGERS, SEEDSMEN AND MULTIPLE STORES, ETC.

GRAHAM FARISH LTD., BROMLEY, KENT · Makers of SNAP VACUUM CLOSURES

"NOW IS THE TIME"

says **FRED STREETER**, V.M.H.

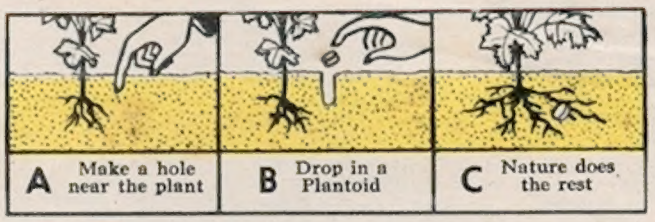
PLANTS are growing fast, feeding fast, hungry for food. Give them Plantoids and see them thrive! Plantoids are the simplest and surest method of plant feeding—they get right to the root of things. You pop in this handy tablet right where it does most good—and how plants love them—you can almost see them grow. Use them for flowers, pot-plants, vegetables, tomatoes and, in fact, all garden plants. Full instructions are in every packet. Take Plantoids round your garden today—so little effort—so rewarding.

ONLY PLANTOIDS HAVE ALL THESE IN TABLET FORM

NITROGEN for growth
POTASH for stamina
PHOSPHATES for ripening
IRON & MANGANESE for colour
CALCIUM for soil sweetening
NAPHTHALENE to discourage pests

Every good fertiliser contains one or more of these ingredients. Plantoids have them all; in scientifically balanced proportion for all-round good, and in tablet form for ease and economy.
No mixing, no dissolving, no scattering, no waste. It's all there in the tablet ready to "get to the root of things"!

SO SIMPLE TO USE — SO CLEAN TO HANDLE



READ WHAT USERS SAY:-

. . . I entered 14 classes and won 13 prizes. *W.N.C., New Cross.*

. . . I have a marvellous crop of tomatoes. *Mrs. N., Sheffield.*

. . . fed with Plantoids the cucumber was 24½" long. 3 lbs. 11½ ozs. weight. *C.H.B., Harrow.*

. . . our roses more beautiful than ever before. *A.E.R., Ely.*

. . . a flower stem (Sweet Pea) bearing ten buds. Plantoids are prodigious. *L.C., Blackpool.*

. . . Plantoids are the finest plant food I have ever used. *F.E.H., Lee.*

The above are "quotes" from unsolicited letters on our files.

HALF PACK (approx. 150 tablets) 2/-
GROWERS PACK (approx. 1,000 tablets) 8/-
STANDARD PACK OF APPROX. 300 **3/6**

(REGD.)

NOW!